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THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN

IN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

IN CANADA

BY ANNE CARVER

March 1969

Prepared for the Royal Commission on the  
Status of Women in Canada





## Table of Contents

<u>SETTING THE STAGE</u>	1
<u>CHAPTER ONE -- WOMEN IN PROVINCIAL AND FEDERAL POLITICS</u>	3
<u>Members Past and Present</u>	3
The Right to Vote and the Right to Hold Office	3
Women in Elected Office -- 1917 to 1935	6
Women in Elected Office, since 1935	10
Geographical Distribution of Women Members	11
Party Affiliations of Women Members	12
Women Appointed to Special Office	13
Length of Service in the House of Commons	14
<u>Members Today and Their Points of View</u>	27
Motivation and Route to Election	29
Winning the Nomination	38
Campaign Expenses	40
Campaign Support	41
Experience in Office	42
Family and Professional Commitments	44
Search for Women Candidates	45
Separate Womens Party Organizations	46
General Comments and Suggestions	47
<u>Women in the Senate</u>	50
<u>CHAPTER TWO -- WOMEN IN MUNICIPAL POLITICS</u>	53
<u>Results of Survey</u>	53
Where are Canada's Women Municipal Councillors Serving	58
Age, Marital Status, Children and Household Help	58
Education	60
Occupations and Professions	61
Community Involvement	61
Route to Election	65
Do Men and Women Enter Municipal Politics for Different Reasons	67
Difficulties Faced in Municipal Office	68
Suggestions for Aspirants to Municipal Office	70
Experience in Office	71
Frustrations in Office	71
Satisfactions of Office	72
Success of Women Candidates in General	74
Length of Service in Municipal Politics	74
Interest in Involvement in other Levels of Politics	74





<u>Men and Women Councillors Compared</u>	76
<u>Women Councillors as People</u>	78
<u>CHAPTER THREE -- WOMEN IN POLITICS IN OTHER COUNTRIES</u>	85
<u>CHAPTER FOUR -- WOMEN AND PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY</u>	95
Political Institutions other than Elected Bodies	95
Participatory Democracy and the Machinery of Involvement	98
New Channels for Advice -- Advisory Councils and Boards	99
New Channels for Political Reaction -- Area Desks	99
The Political Parties and Participation by Women	100
The Liberal Leadership Convention, April 1968	103
Women Candidates in the Three Major Political Parties	106
The Uncommitted Woman Voter	109
Women in Pressure Groups	111
<u>CHAPTER FIVE -- CONCLUSIONS AND GOALS</u>	121





## SETTING THE STAGE

No one will deny that the last half of the year 1967 and the whole of 1968 have witnessed a tremendous burst of political activity and interest in Canada. The leadership crisis in the Progressive Conservative Party and the Progressive Conservative leadership convention in September, 1967, Premier Robarts' Confederation of Tomorrow Conference in November, 1967, the federal Constitutional Conference in February, the retirement of Prime Minister Pearson, the Liberal leadership convention, and the general election were events engaging the avid attention of the nation; events which, thanks to television, were very much with us in our own living rooms.

But, as we watched the drama, at least to the extent that we kept our eyes on centre stage, it became clear that the action was being carried by an all-male cast. The impression is only strengthened by an examination of the current crop of books reporting the contemporary political scene. Riffle through the pages or scan the index of Peter Newman's The Distemper of Our Times, or Martin Sullivan's Mandate '68, or Donald Peacock's Journey to Power. Women are simply not there. A peripheral comment or two about Judy LaMarsh, a few paragraphs on Flora MacDonald, a page on Mary Macdonald, a passing reference to





Pauline Jewett, Margaret Rideout, Jean Wadds, and one or two others, a nod to Mrs. Pearson, Mrs. Diefenbaker and a few Ministerial and Parliamentary wives, a paragraph naming the young women who worked effectively for the Trudeau organization during the leadership campaign -- and that is about it.

As of January 1, 1969, only one out of 264 members of the Canadian House of Commons is a woman. Ten provincial legislatures and two territorial councils, with a total of 677<sup>12</sup> seats have, between them, only <sup>12</sup>14 women members. There are 5 women in the Senate out of a possible 102. Of a total of 1,043 seats then, at the federal and provincial levels of government, only <sup>18</sup>20, or slightly less than 2%, are held by women.

Where are the women? Why are so few visible in the political scene? It is the purpose of this study, if not to answer, at least to illuminate these questions.

*This figure included the 24 members of the Legislative Council of the Province of Quebec which was abolished, effective December 31, 1968.*





## Chapter One

### WOMEN IN PROVINCIAL AND FEDERAL POLITICS

#### Members Past and Present

##### The Right to Vote and the Right to Hold Office

Beginning with Manitoba in January, 1916, and ending with Quebec in April, 1940, Canadian women "a mare usque ad mare" achieved legal equality with men in voting and in eligibility to hold office in federal and provincial legislatures.<sup>1</sup> The struggle for the vote was, all things considered, a rather respectable dignified operation, unmarked by the violent and sometimes bizarre episodes which characterized the suffragette movement in England and the United States. The movement in Canada was led by a relatively small number of able, articulate women. They found their support in the new women's organizations which were growing up at about the turn of the century -- the local, provincial, and national Councils of Women, the University Women's Clubs, the W.C.T.U., the Women's Institutes, the farmers' organizations, and the Canadian Women's Press Club. But the movement could never be classified as widely popular in the numerical sense. Except in Quebec, where the struggle was long-drawn-out and sometimes bitter, the operation seems to have taken place against a background of considerable apathy, both male and female. The Canadian woman gained the right to vote without, in fact, "losing her cool".

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<sup>1</sup> See Table I.





TABLE I

Women in Canada

Right to Vote and Right to Hold Office<sup>1</sup>  
in Federal and Provincial Legislature

<u>Right to vote in federal elections</u>	<u>Date achieved</u>
Relatives of members of armed forces --	Sept. 20, 1917
All women (on the same basis as men)	May 24, 1918
<u>Right to hold office in House of Commons</u>	July 7, 1918
<u>Eligibility for appointments to Senate</u>	Oct. 18, 1929
<u>Right to vote in provincial elections</u> <u>and in Newfoundland</u>	
Manitoba	Jan. 28, 1916
Saskatchewan	March 14, 1916
Alberta	April 19, 1916
British Columbia	April 5, 1917
Ontario	April 12, 1917
Nova Scotia	April 26, 1918
New Brunswick	April 17, 1919
Prince Edward Island	May 3, 1922
Newfoundland	April 13, 1925
Quebec	April 25, 1940
<u>Right to hold office in Provincial Legislative</u> <u>Assemblies and Newfoundland</u>	
Same dates as Right to Vote except for	
Ontario	April 24, 1919
New Brunswick	March 9, 1934

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<sup>1</sup> Cleverdon, Catherine Lyle, The Woman Suffrage Movement in Canada. (University of Toronto Press: 1950), p. 2



This is not to belittle, in any way, the wholly admirable part played by the women who were the leaders. They were an impressive group -- energetic, educated, clear-headed, rational, compassionate, and persistent. Many of the Canadian "greats" worked for the franchise, not as an end in itself, but as a means to achieve social goals which they, and often their mothers before them, had failed to win without the vote. Helen Gregory MacGill in British Columbia, and Emily Murphy in Alberta, were deeply concerned with laws affecting women and children in particular, and with social reform in general. Louise McKinney of Alberta, and Nellie McClung of Manitoba and Alberta, saw the women's franchise partly as the basic tool for controlling demon rum and the "liquor traffic"; Irene Parlby of Alberta was interested in securing legislation to improve the lot of rural women.

Looking back at their activities in the first 15 or 20 years of the century, we are struck by the gradual perfecting of a technique which proved remarkably successful. The development of this technique is clearly demonstrated in the remarkable career of Helen MacGill, one of the brightest lights in the story of women's rights in Canada. Born in Ontario, more than one hundred years ago, into a family who regarded domestic and social life as the only acceptable milieu for a lady, she was distinguished, her daughter writes, by a "disturbing thrust of intellect" and ideas which "ran counter to the strong emotional prejudices of her time".<sup>1</sup> Bachelor of Music, B.A., and M.A. (Mental and Moral

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<sup>1</sup> Elsie Gregory MacGill, My Mother the Judge. (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1955), p. 54.





Philosophy), journalist, wife, mother, she was a perceptive and articulate critic of the society in which she lived, whether in California, Minnesota, or British Columbia, to which she moved in 1902. Living in Vancouver, she lost little time in identifying the urgent need for reform of the laws affecting women and children, and this remained her major interest until she died.

To achieve their goals, Mrs. MacGill and her contemporaries worked out a process which could be itemized something like this. Isolate the problem. Work through the already existing women's organizations from which support might be expected. Organize a widely-based joint committee to study the problem. Hold meetings to hear the experts and inform the public. Examine the methods being used to deal with the problem in other parts of Canada and in other countries. Decide on remedies applicable to the local situation. Draw up suggested legislation. Embody the legislation in a petition. Gather signatures. Collect a strong delegation and present the petition to government.

This they did again and again. It was when the petitions for reform legislation failed to get action that Helen MacGill and her colleagues switched to pressing for the franchise with renewed vigour and considerable political acumen.

#### Women in Elected Office - 1917 to 1935

A significant difference is apparent in the history of women's participation between the western and the eastern provinces, and similarly between provincial and federal politics. Because





of their reform-oriented approach the western women, at least in British Columbia and Alberta, pursued their advantage once political equality was won, and placed candidates for election in the field whose names were associated with social goals.

Mrs. Mary Ellen Smith was elected Member for Vancouver City in a by-election in 1918, following the death of her husband, who was Minister of Finance in the Liberal administration. She ran as an Independent on a social reform platform, but was embraced by the Liberals when she was successful. For ten years she held her seat, refusing the Speakership and giving up her position as Minister without Portfolio, because she wished to concentrate on shepherding social reforms through the Legislature.

Mrs. Louise McKinney became member for Claresholm, Alberta, in 1917.<sup>1</sup> She was defeated in 1921, but Mrs. Nellie McClung and Mrs. Irene Parlby were elected that year in Edmonton and Lacombe respectively. Though members of different parties, they found themselves in agreement on questions relating to the welfare of women and children.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile Helen MacGill, now Judge of the Juvenile Court in Vancouver, did not relax. She organized classes for women in public speaking and parliamentary procedure, and published a guide entitled "How to Conduct Public Meetings in Canada". At regular intervals she brought out an up-to-date edition of her

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<sup>1</sup> Miss Roberta MacAdams was also elected in Alberta in 1917, but as one of the soldiers' representatives. She was not primarily associated with the suffrage movement.

<sup>2</sup> Eleanor Harman, "Five Persons from Alberta", p. 172, in The Clear Spirit, Edited by Mary Quayle Innis. (Toronto; University of Toronto Press, 1960).



summary of laws affecting women and children in British Columbia, ticking off the reforms which had been accomplished, and listing proposals for further legislation.

To these women, social legislation, votes for women, political education for women, and women as candidates for election were all part of the same process. This point of view, perhaps, accounts for the cohesiveness, élan and purpose which seemed to carry them along through at least the first ten or twelve years of their political equality with men. It was a natural progression for Judge Emily Murphy to lead her five "persons" from Alberta, Nellie McClung, Louise McKinney, Irene Parlby, and Henrietta Edwards, to secure for women the right to sit in the Senate. In 1929 they appealed successfully to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council to have women recognized as "persons" within the meaning of the British North America Act, thus making them eligible for appointment to the Upper House.

In Ontario and the rest of Eastern Canada this connection between votes, women as Members, and practical social programmes did not develop. The leaders of the suffrage movement do not appear to have become candidates for election, and if they did they were not successful. Except for Lady Squires in Newfoundland, who was a member of the Newfoundland Legislature from 1928 to 1932, no woman was a member of any provincial legislature east of the Lakehead until 1943. Agnes MacPhail, elected to the House of Commons in 1921, had no personal connection with the fight





for political equality. She was elected to represent quite specifically the farmers' interests in her constituency of South-East Grey, Ontario. But even in British Columbia and Alberta the first flush of enthusiasm passed, along with the youth of the principal participants. Before 1935 British Columbia had still elected only 2 women, Alberta 4, Saskatchewan one, and Manitoba one.

In the depression-ridden thirties women who might well have been involved with their political rights twenty years earlier were concerning themselves with basic economic and social questions. The emergence of the new political parties, CCF and Social Credit, appears to have captured the interest of the politically minded among them. From 1935 to the present time British Columbia and Alberta between them elected 21 women to their provincial legislatures. Nineteen of these were either CCF or Social Credit, and one of the two others turned Social Credit in mid-career.

<sup>1</sup>  
Up to 1935 then, there had been only 8 women elected to the legislatures of British Columbia and the prairie provinces; the one and only maverick female ever elected in Newfoundland had come and gone; there was no one between the

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<sup>1</sup> For detailed listing of provincial and federal women members, their party affiliations, term in office, cabinet positions, etc., see Tables II to XV.





Manitoba border and the Atlantic, except the magnificent Agnes MacPhail, sitting in the House of Commons in Ottawa.

Women in Elected Office, since 1935

The late thirties and forties saw the modest burst of activity already noted in British Columbia and Alberta. Saskatchewan elected a CCF Member and Manitoba a Social Credit to their legislatures; Ontario elected its first two provincial Members, both CCF. Meanwhile Mrs. George Black of the Yukon had joined Agnes MacPhail in the House of Commons in 1935. She was avowedly merely pinch-hitting for her ailing husband, who had been Speaker during the previous Conservative regime.<sup>1</sup> The two first women Members left the federal scene together in 1940, and Saskatchewan sent Mrs. Dorise Nielsen, United Progressive Party, and later Mrs. Gladys Strum, CCF, to Ottawa. From Alberta came Mrs. Cora Casselman, the first woman Liberal at the federal level, and the first woman Member to sit on the government side of the House.

The forties were distinguished by a high point and a low in the history of Canadian women in politics. From 1941 to 1945 there were 5 women sitting in the British Columbia Legislature. This constituted more than 10% of the 48 seats,

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<sup>1</sup> Mrs. George Black, My Seventy Years. (Toronto: Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd., 1938) p. 309.



the highest percentage of seats occupied by women ever reached at any time in either provincial or federal legislatures in Canada. At the other end of the scale, for the period from the general election of June 27, 1949 to the success of Mrs. Ellen Fairclough in the Hamilton West by-election in 1950, there was, for the first and only time since 1921, no woman sitting in the Canadian House of Commons.

During the fifties and sixties the pace of participation quickened perceptibly. There were more than twice as many women in the House of Commons in the 1960s than in any previous decade. Out of a total of 18 women ever elected to the Commons, 11 were still serving, or were elected, in the last 9 years. From November 1964 to November 1965 there were a record 6 women in the House of Commons at the same time. But hopes that we might be heading into a period of steady increase were dashed on June 25, 1968, when only one woman Member survived in the general election.

Numbers at the provincial level increased. Out of a total of 46 women ever elected to provincial legislatures and territorial councils, 24 have been Members during the 1960s, and <sup>12</sup>~~14~~ are presently sitting.

#### Geographical Distribution of Women Members

The geographical distribution of women Members shows a marked difference in interest in provincial and federal politics





in Western Canada as compared with the East. Out of 46 Members in the provincial legislatures and territorial councils, 38, or 82%, were in the West, i.e., the Yukon, British Columbia, and the Prairies, while only 8 were in the East -- Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland. Of the 18 federal Members of Parliament, on the other hand, 8 represented Ontario constituencies, one was from New Brunswick and one from Prince Edward Island, making a total of 10 from the East. Of the remaining 8, 3 were from Saskatchewan and one each from British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, the Yukon and Northwest Territories.

#### Party Affiliations of Women Members

Party affiliations of the 46 women Members at the provincial-territorial level have been 30% Social Credit, 28% CCF-NDP, 21% Liberal, 13% Conservative - Progressive Conservative, and 8% Independent or other. Of the <sup>12</sup>~~14~~ women currently Members, 4 are Progressive Conservative, 4 are Social Credit, <sup>2</sup>~~3~~ are NDP, and <sup>1</sup>~~2~~ <sup>16</sup>~~are~~ Liberal. The Yukon Territorial Council, with its one woman Member, is non-partisan.

In the House of Commons, the 18 women Members have been predominantly associated with the old-line parties. There have been 7 Liberal, 7 Conservative - Progressive Conservative, 2 CCF - NDP, one Independent (Agnes MacPhail) closely associated with the CCF, and one United Progressive (allegedly Communist). The one woman



Member in the present House is NDP.

Women Appointed to Special Office

In the provincial legislatures 2 women have been appointed Speaker, Mrs. Nancy Hodges of British Columbia, and Mrs. Thelma Forbes of Manitoba. Eight women have reached Cabinet rank. British Columbia has had 4 Ministers without Portfolio, and Alberta 2. In Manitoba Mrs. Forbes is Minister of Urban Development and Municipal Affairs. In Quebec Madame Claire Kirkland-Casgrain was Minister without Portfolio and subsequently Minister of Transport and Communication.

In the federal government 2 women have between them held 5 cabinet posts. Mrs. Ellen Fairclough was Secretary of State, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, and Postmaster General. Miss Judy LaMarsh was Minister of Health and Welfare, and Secretary of State. Two women have been parliamentary secretaries to the Minister of Health and Welfare - Mrs. Jean Casselman (now Wadds), and Mrs. Margaret Rideout.





Length of Service in the House of Commons

Of the 18 women Members of the House of Commons, 10 served only one term. <sup>Five</sup> ~~Three~~ were elected 5 times, <sup>one</sup> ~~one~~ <sup>were</sup> ~~was~~ elected 4 times, one was elected 3 times, and 3 were elected twice.

Eleven of the 18 women were Members for less than 5 years. Two served 5 years. The remaining 5 served 8, 9, 10, 13, and 19 years respectively.<sup>1</sup>

This is perhaps not an impressive record, but it should be noted that it is not very different from the normal pattern for all Members of the House of Commons. It is estimated that more than half of all elected Members serve only one or <sup>2</sup> two terms.

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<sup>1</sup> See Table II

<sup>2</sup> Norman Ward, The Canadian House of Commons, University of Toronto Press, 1950, p. 139.



Table II

Women in the House of Commons

	<u>Constituency</u>	<u>Party</u>	<u>Period in office</u>	<u>Elections won</u>
Miss Agnes MacPhail <i>Macphail</i>	South-East Grey Grey-Bruce, Ontario	United Farmers of Ontario and Independent	1921-1940	5
Mrs. George Black ^	Yukon	Conservative	1935-1940^^^	1
Mrs. Dorise Nielsen	North Battleford, Saskatchewan	United Progressive	1940-1945	1
Mrs. Cora Casselman^	Edmonton, Alberta	Liberal	^^1941-1945	1
Mrs. Gladys Strum	Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan	C.C.F.	1945-1949	1
Mrs. Ellen Fairclough	Hamilton West, Ontario	Progressive Conservative	^^1950-1963 (a)	5
Miss Margaret Aitken	York-Humber, Ontario	Progressive Conservative	1953-1962	3
Miss Sybil Bennett	Malton, Ontario	Progressive Conservative	1953-1956^^^	1
Mrs. Ann Shipley	Temiskaming, Ontario	Liberal	1953-1957	1
Mrs. Jean Casselman^ (now Wadds)	Grenville-Dundas, Ontario	Progressive Conservative	^^1958-1968 (b)	5
Miss Judy LaMarsh	Niagara Falls, Ontario	Liberal	^^1960-1968 (c)^^^	4
Mrs. Margaret Macdonald^	Kings, Prince Edward Island	Progressive Conservative	^^1961-1963	2
Mrs. J. Isabel Hardie	Northwest Territories	Liberal	1962-1963	1
Miss Pauline Jewett	Northumberland, Ontario	Liberal	1963-1965	1
Mrs. Margaret Konantz	Winnipeg South, Manitoba	Liberal	1963-1965	1
Dr. Eloise Jones ^	Saskatoon, Saskatchewan	Progressive Conservative	^^1964-1965^^^	1





Women in the House of Commons - (continued)

	<u>Constituency</u>	<u>Party</u>	<u>Period in office</u> (d)	<u>Elections won</u>
Mrs. Margaret Rideout ^	Westmorland, N.B.	Liberal	1964-1968	2
Mrs. Grace MacInnis	Vancouver Kingsway, N.D.P. British Columbia		1965 - to date	2

(a)  
Secretary of State, 1957; Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, 1958;  
Postmaster General, 1962.

(b)  
Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and Welfare, 1962.

(c)  
Minister of Health and Welfare, 1963; Secretary of State, 1965.

(d)  
Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and Welfare, 1966.

Succeeded to husband's seat (6)

^Elected for first time in a by-election (7)

^^Retired undefeated (Mrs. Black and Miss LaMarsh and Dr. Jones) - or died (Miss Bennett).  
All others (except Mrs. MacInnis, the only woman Member as of January 1, 1969)  
were defeated.

Total Number of Women Members

Liberal Party	7
Conservative - Progressive Conservative Party	7
Cooperative Commonwealth Federation - New Democratic Party	2
Independent	1
United Progressive Party	<u>1</u>
	18

Number of Women from Each Province and Territory

British Columbia	1	New Brunswick	1
Alberta	1	Nova Scotia	0
Saskatchewan	3	Prince Edward Island	1
Manitoba	1	Newfoundland	0
Ontario	8	Yukon	1
Quebec	0	Northwest Territories	1

Largest number of women in office at one time - 6 (November 1964 to November 1965)









Table IV

Women in the Alberta Legislature

	<u>Constituency</u>	<u>Party</u>	<u>Period in Office</u>
Miss Roberta MacAdams (Price)	Armed Services	Ind.	1917-1921
Mrs. Louise McKinney	Claresholm	Ind.	1917-1921
Mrs. Nellie McClung	Edmonton	Liberal	1921-1926
Mrs. Irene Parlby	Lacombe	U.F.A.	1921-1935 (1921-1935, MWP^^)
Mrs. E.H. Gostick	Calgary	S.C.	1935-1940
Mrs. E.B. Rogers	Ponoka	S.C.	1935-1940
Mrs. Cornelia Wood	Stony Plain	S.C.	1940-1955; 1959-1967
Mrs. Edith Thurston	Cypress	S.C.	1944-1948
Mrs. Rose Wilkinson	Calgary	S.C.	1944-1963
Mrs. Elizabeth Robinson	Medicine Hat	S.C.	^1953-1960
Mrs. Ethel Wilson	Edmonton North	S.C.	1959- to date (1962, MWP^^)

Total number of women Members - 11

Independents - 2

Liberal- 1

United Farmers of Alberta - 1

Social Credit - 7

Largest number sitting at the same time - 4 (1959-1960)

Number sitting as of January 1, 1969 - 1

^ - By-election

^^ - MWP - Minister without Portfolio



Table V

Women in the Saskatchewan Legislature

	<u>Constituency</u>	<u>Party</u>	<u>Period in Office</u>
Mrs. Sarah Ramsland	Pelly	Liberal	1919-1925
Mrs. Beatrice Trew	Maple Creek	C.C.F.	1944-1948
Mrs. Marjorie Cooper Hunt	Regina City	C.C.F.-N.D.P.	1952 - <sup>1967</sup> to-date
Mrs. Mary J. Batten	Humboldt	Liberal	1956-1964
Mrs. Gladys Strum	Saskatoon City	C.C.F.-N.D.P.	1960-1964
Mrs. Sally Merchant	Saskatoon City	Liberal	1964 - <sup>1967</sup> to-date

Total number of women Members - 6

Liberals - 3

Co-operative Commonwealth Federation - New Democratic Party - 3

Largest number sitting at the same time - 3 (1960-1964)

Number sitting as of January 1, 1969 - 2 Mrs.



Table VI

Women in the Manitoba Legislature

	<u>Constituency</u>	<u>Party</u>	<u>Period in Office</u>
rs. Edith Rogers	Winnipeg	Liberal	1920-1932
Miss Salome Halldorson	St. George	S.C.	1936-1940
rs. Thelma Forbes	Cypress	P.C.	1959- to date (1963, Speaker) (1966, Minister ^^)
rs. C. Morrison	Pembina	P.C.	^1960 - to date

Total number of women Members -- 4

Liberals - 1  
Social Credit - 1  
Progressive Conservative - 2

Longest number sitting at the same time - 2 (1960 to date)

Number sitting as of January 1, 1969- 2

- By-election

^^- Minister of Urban Development and Municipal Affairs





Table VII

Women in the Ontario Legislature

	<u>Constituency</u>	<u>Party</u>	<u>Period in Office</u>
Miss Agnes MacPhail	York East	C.C.F.	1943-1945; 1948-1951
Mrs. M.R. Lucock	Bracondale	C.C.F.	1943-1945
Mrs. Ada Pritchard	Hamilton West	P.C.	1963- to date
Mrs. Margaret Renwick	Scarborough Centre	N.D.P.	1967 - to date

Total number of women Members — 4

Co-operative Commonwealth Federation — New Democratic Party — 3  
Progressive Conservatives — 1

Largest number sitting at the same time — 2 (1943-1945, and 1967 to date)

Number sitting as of January 1, 1969 — 2



Table VIII

Women Candidates in Ontario Elections

(Note: In the Ontario general election of 1902 a Miss Haille, described as "Socialist", ran in Toronto North and received 81 votes)

<u>Date of Election</u>	<u>Legislature</u>	<u>Number of women candidates</u>	<u>Number of women elected</u>
October 20, 1919	15th	2	none
June 25, 1923	16th	4	none
December 1, 1926	17th	2	none
October 30, 1929	18th	4	none
June 19, 1934	19th	6	none
October 6, 1937	20th	2	none
August 4, 1943	21st	5	2
June 4, 1945	22nd	6	none
July 7, 1948	23rd	7	1 (reelected)
September 22, 1951	24th	5	none
General election 1953		2	none
General election 1954		1	none
June 9, 1955	25th	9	none
General election 1956		1	none
General election 1958		3	none
June 11, 1959	26th	14	none
General election 1962		1	none
September 25, 1963	27th	14	1
October 17, 1967	28th	16	2 (1 reelected)

104 ^^

When ambiguous names have been included: e.g., "Rae", "Pat", "Lynn".

Woman in all, as 10 women ran twice and 3 women ran four times.





Table IX

Women in the Quebec Legislature

	<u>Constituency</u>	<u>Party</u>	<u>Period in Office</u>
Claire Kirkland-Casgrain	Jacques Cartier	Liberal	1961 - to date (1962, MWP^^) (1964, Minister of Transport and Communication)

Member sitting as of January 1, 1969 - 1

-election.      11 MWP. Minister without Portfolio



Table X

Women in the New Brunswick Legislature

	<u>Constituency</u>	<u>Party</u>	<u>Period in Office</u>
Mrs. Brenda Robertson	Albert County	P.C.	1967 to date
<u>Member sitting as of January 1, 1969 - 1</u>			

Table XI

Women in the Nova Scotia Legislature

	<u>Constituency</u>	<u>Party</u>	<u>Period in Office</u>
Mrs. Gladys Porter	Kings North	P.C.	1960 - 1967
<u>Member sitting as of January 1, 1969 - none</u>			

Table XII

Women in the Prince Edward Island Legislature

None

Table XIII

Women in the Newfoundland Legislature

Since Confederation - none

(Pre-Confederation — Lady Squires, Liberal, 1928-1932)



Table XIV

Women in the Council of the Yukon Territory

Mrs. G.J. Gordon

Mayo

Currently in office





Table XV

Women in the Council of the Northwest Territories

None



Members Today and Their Points of View

So much for the plain facts and patterns of women's participation in provincial and federal politics as elected Members. Depth and colour are added by the material provided in correspondence and discussion with the women who are now, or have recently been, Members. An attempt has been made to write to or interview most of the <sup>14</sup> ~~14~~ women who are at present, <sup>or have very recently been</sup> Members at the provincial level, and as many as possible of the 13<sup>1</sup> women who have been members of the House of Commons since 1950.

These women parliamentarians were asked to comment on why they ran: -- the circumstances in their background, education, profession, and community experience which influenced them to enter the political field. They were asked about their experience as candidates: -- their relationships with their party organizations; their experience in seeking the nomination; whether traditional attitudes and prejudices as to the role of women proved a serious obstacle; whether campaign expenses are a major factor in holding women back as compared with men; and whether they were helped by women's organizations such as the Local Council of Women or Women's Institutes. They were asked about their experience as Members: -- what were and are their satisfactions and frustrations; whether they have served on the parliamentary committees in which they are most

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<sup>1</sup> Miss Sybil Bennett, Mrs. Margaret Macdonald, and Mrs. Margaret Konantz are dead.





interested; whether they have been at any disadvantage in appointments to parliamentary assistantships and cabinet posts. They were also asked about the difficulties of meshing a political career with family or professional responsibilities.

The Members were asked whether they think their parties make serious efforts to seek out women candidates. They were asked about the role of the women's groups within their party organizations, and whether they feel the separate women's party organizations should be dissolved and the women drawn into the mainstream of the party organization.

Finally, Members were asked for their views on the reason why so comparatively few women offer themselves as candidates for election, and for their suggestions as to what might be done to encourage greater participation.



### Motivation and Route to Election

Politics in Home and School. Early environment appears to have played a surprisingly important part in shaping the careers of women politicians. Almost all report a vigorous political atmosphere in their childhood homes. Credit goes to a "politically conscious" family and father; a father who ran for the provincial legislature; a great friend of the family who was a Member; an argumentative family with a lively interest in political questions. "I came from a political family," says one. "Politics were dinner-table conversation from the time I was a little girl." Another writes of her father: "He took the family to all political meetings and afterwards we all discussed what was said by the speakers and which policies we considered to be in the interest of the general public."

Special importance is ascribed by one Member to her high school principal, a man "very much in tune with public affairs", who injected discussion about municipal, provincial and federal concerns into the curriculum. Another member recognizes her debt to an outstanding high school history teacher who stimulated her "to think for herself and question". Parents and teachers together are credited with illustrating the principle that involvement in some type of public service is the responsibility of every citizen.

Most of the Members, then, seem to have grown up among the politically "concerned". One, however, suggests that her interest in politics developed not so much through positive indoctrination by parents and teachers as from her own childhood



experience during the Depression. Though a good student, she had to drop out of school at the age of fourteen for economic reasons, and became very early aware of the exposed and vulnerable position of a considerable segment of the population. Appreciation, at first hand, of social need led to her involvement in politics.

Professions and Occupations and Their Bearing on Political

Careers. There is no obvious common denominator in these women's careers before election. Their professions and occupations are widely diversified. Among the women Members of the House of Commons since 1950 there have been two lawyers (Miss Bennett and Miss LaMarsh), a professor of political science (Dr. Jewett), a medical doctor (Dr. Jones), a newspaper columnist (Miss Aitken), a writer (Mrs. MacInnis), a business executive (Mrs. Fairclough), and a leader in the field of local, national and international voluntary organizations (Mrs. Konantz). Provincial Members include a slight preponderance of former teachers, several business women, a former industrial worker and union executive, a lawyer, a nurse, and a former rural mail-carrier. In the Canadian setting it seems necessary to add the category of "Member's wife" as an occupation prior to election, albeit an occupation often overlapping with one of the others mentioned.

The only generalization that can usefully be made here is that these women's professions and occupations tend to be of a sort that provides a degree of visibility, or status, or both.





Very few Canadian women have come into the House of Commons on the basis of outstanding professional achievement alone. Dr. Pauline Jewett is perhaps the only one in this category! She offered a distinguished academic career and specialization in politics, government and communication. On the other hand, prominence in a professional field can be an important route to Parliament for men, especially for potential cabinet ministers. Students of the Canadian Parliament are very aware of the widespread tendency of party leaders to recruit a considerable proportion of political outsiders from other professions directly into the cabinet, or to bring them into the cabinet during their first terms as Members of Parliament.<sup>1</sup> The Prime Minister and the two Liberal Prime Ministers who preceded him are examples of this procedure.

Community Involvement and Municipal Government Experience.

Outside their professional concerns the women Members are frequently, but not always, associated with women's organizations such as the Local Council of Women, Women's Ins-

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<sup>1</sup> John Porter, The Vertical Mosaic. (University of Toronto Press, 1965), pp. 400, 407, 408.



titute, the Business and Professional Women's Club, and the I.O.D.E. Some have a wide experience at the policy level in the social welfare field and in other community and national organizations which involve both men and women. Mrs. Margaret Konantz of Winnipeg, for example, was president of the Central Volunteer Bureau of Winnipeg, on the executive of the Council of Social Agencies and of the Canadian Welfare Council. She was also national vice-president of UNICEF and the United Nations Association.

One of the most impressive recurring factors in the Members' pre-parliamentary careers is their participation in government at the municipal level. At least 7 of the 27 women under discussion in this section have been appointed to municipal boards or commissions, or have been elected to school boards, or have run for or been elected to municipal councils.

In the provincial field the Honourable Ethel Wilson's route to the legislature led her, as a member of the United Packinghouse Workers of America, through six years as Secretary-Treasurer of the Edmonton Council of the Canadian Congress of Labour, to six two-year terms as Alderman on the City of Edmonton Municipal Council. Mrs. Ada Pritchard was Alderman, Controller and Deputy Mayor of Hamilton over an eleven-year period. Mrs. Eileen Dailly had ten years on the School Board in Burnaby,





part of the time as Chairman. She also chaired the Metropolitan Health Board. In Vancouver, the Honourable Grace McCarthy was Commissioner, Board of Parks and Public Recreation.

Before reaching the House of Commons, the Honourable Ellen Fairclough served as Alderman, Controller, and Deputy Mayor of Hamilton. Mrs. Ann Shipley was Reeve of Kirkland Lake. Mrs. Grace MacInnis came to Ottawa, having run for City Council, and also having been Member for Vancouver-Burrard in the Provincial Legislature.

There can be little doubt of the relevance of this type of experience to a career at the higher levels of government. It has been estimated that more than half of the Members of the House of Commons since 1867 have started out in local politics.<sup>1</sup> Interestingly enough, however, the proportion of federal cabinet ministers having experience in municipal governments is very much lower. Of the 88 federal cabinet ministers who held office between 1940 and 1960, only 16% had had such experience.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Norman Ward, The Canadian House of Commons: Representation. (University of Toronto Press, 1950), p. 124

<sup>2</sup> John Porter, The Vertical Mosaic. (University of Toronto Press, 1965), p. 399



Party Involvement. With a very few exceptions the women Members have been active in their parties before running themselves -- some of them since their high school days. Some have held office in Young Liberal or Young Progressive Conservative organizations, and some mention the women's party organizations. Some have been in executive positions in their constituency organizations. Several have had experience campaigning for other candidates. One was campaign manager for the candidate whom she later succeeded. Few, presumably, can match the party service of Judy LaMarsh. During her 22 years of service in the Liberal Party, she was Treasurer of the Ontario Young Liberal Association, Vice-President of the National Young Liberal Federation, Secretary and later President of the Ontario Women's Liberal Association, Vice-President and Constitutional Chairman of the National Women's Liberal Federation, Vice-President of the Ontario Liberal Association, and a member of the Advisory Committee of the Liberal Party of Canada.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Judy LaMarsh, Memoirs of a Bird in a Gilded Cage.  
(Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, 1968), p. 3



As might be expected several Members report that they learned the political ropes while helping their husbands campaign, and through attending to constituency business while their husbands were occupied with parliamentary responsibilities in Ottawa or the provincial capitals. Mrs. Margaret Renwick moved on to contest and win a seat herself in 1967 Ontario election. She and her husband now both sit in the Ontario Legislature, representing Scarborough Centre and Riverdale respectively. The only other husband and wife team in Canadian parliamentary history was Sir Richard Squires, Premier of Newfoundland, and Lady Squires in the pre-Confederation period of 1928-1932.<sup>1</sup>

It seems proper to classify under "party involvement" the route to election followed by a significant proportion of women Members of the House of Commons in Canada, that is to say the succession of a wife to her husband's seat, following his illness or death. There have been five instances of this since 1950 (seven since 1917). Jean Casselman (since 1964, Jean Wadds), Margaret Macdonald, Eloise Jones, and Margaret Rideout won their seats in by-elections following their husbands' deaths. Isabel Hardie won her husband's seat in the 1962 general election. This has been the single most

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<sup>1</sup> Cleverden, op. cit., p. 212





frequently travelled path to the federal Parliament for Canadian women. Since it depends on fortuitous and unfortunate circumstances over which women have no control, it offers very little that is constructive to the general study of their candidacy. It does, however, illustrate that to be well-known in a constituency, and deeply involved in the political organization have been two of the most important prerequisites for a woman aspirant to elected office. It is also important to note that, while Mrs. Casselman-Wadds went on to win <sup>three</sup> ~~four~~ more elections, Mrs. Macdonald and Mrs. Rideout were defeated the third time they ran, and Mrs. Hardie the second. Dr. Jones did not run a second time.



In Summary. To generalize from the information gathered about the women who have been elected to provincial and federal parliaments it may be said that while brains, ability and "charisma" are no doubt always useful, they are probably never enough. A woman stands a better chance of election if she possesses at least two of the following attributes: 1) parents and family who were interested, and preferably personally involved in politics; 2) a schooling which developed her interest in public questions together with a sense of responsibility for the running of the town, the province, the country; either 3) no husband, or 4) a husband who is very much a political person and who supports his wife's political ambitions; 5) a profession or occupation which provides, if not distinction, at least some visibility and status; 6) identification with community concerns and social problems at the local level; 7) membership in local and national organizations concerned with some aspect of public policy, some of them possibly women's organizations; 8) experience as an appointed member of a municipal commission or as an elected member of a school board, or preferably a municipal council; and finally 9) plenty of experience as a party worker, with extra marks for having been campaign manager for a successful candidate or on the executive of the local constituency organization.



### Winning the Nomination

In the Canadian parliamentary system any woman can become a candidate for election and have her name placed on the ballot if she has been formally nominated by a petition containing ten signatures, and has made a \$200. deposit. But in order to be adopted by one of the political parties as their official candidate she must, of course, face the party's nominating convention in her constituency and win the nomination. It is clear that this hurdle was a formidable one for almost all the women Members under discussion, and especially for those seeking the Liberal or Progressive Conservative nomination. Margaret Aitken, Progressive Conservative, has described in detail her five months of carefully organized campaigning in 1952-53 in the new riding of York-Humber to line up delegates who would support her at the nominating convention.<sup>1</sup> Her account illustrates clearly that the toughest battle is at the constituency level. Though sought out and pressed to run by the party top brass, and though approved by the leader, she was warned never to mention that "the party" wanted her, since constituencies take a "we-choose-our-own-candidate" line against anything smacking of interference from above.

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<sup>1</sup> Margaret Aitken and Byrne Hope Sanders, Hey Ma! I did It. (Toronto: Clark Irwin and Co., Ltd., 1953).





In the struggle for the nomination the candidate is on her own, standing on her personal qualifications and ability. It is therefore at this stage that prejudices come into play and the argument that "you can't win with a woman" has to be met. Even with the support of the constituency organization, success is by no means a foregone conclusion. Individual party members may organize opposition and bring it into play against the woman candidate at the nominating convention. Judy LaMarsh described at length her spadework in the constituency when she was seeking the nomination. In her case, opposition came from the national organization. The Executive Director of the National Liberal Federation, she says, worked against her nomination in Niagara Falls.<sup>1</sup>

The women Members under discussion were opposed for the nomination by as many as 7 men. Only two report receiving the nomination by acclamation. One belongs to one of the newer parties, and is in the provincial, not the federal field. The other was acclaimed when she agreed to run against an incumbent member (of the opposite party) who was considered unbeatable. Later, when he died and her party's hopes rose, she had to fight for the nomination against stiff opposition.

On the whole, the evidence points to a hard fight, and sometimes an unpleasant one, when a woman seeks nomination.

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<sup>1</sup> Judy LaMarsh, op. cit., pp. 5, 285.



### Campaign Expenses

The Members do not, for the most part, feel that campaign expenses are any greater barrier for the woman candidate than for the men, but barrier they certainly are. One woman writes "Yes, I think campaign expenses exclude many worthwhile women from public office. Neither a housewife or a professional woman dares pile up campaign debts." There is a slight suggestion also that a woman faces more uncertainty than a man as to the recovery of major expenses. NDP women candidates, like the men, are financed by the party organization. Their concern is rather that they are at a disadvantage because candidates of other parties are frequently in a position to conduct more costly campaigns. After the general election of 1965, one candidate declared campaign expenses exceeding \$40,000; 115 declared sums between \$10,000 and \$40,000; 230 spent between \$1,000 and \$10,000; 93 less than \$1,000.<sup>1</sup> The scale of these expenditures does raise the question as to whether women are even less likely than men to have access to such sums. Two women Members from different parties voiced support for legislation to limit campaign expenses

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<sup>1</sup> Roman March, "An Empirical Test of M. Ostrogorski's Theory of Political Evolution in the British Parliamentary System." Unpublished doctoral thesis, Indiana University, 1967, p. 170. Mr. March is using material from the "Report of the Committee on Election Expenses," (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1966).



by imposing a maximum based on the number of voters in the constituency.

### Campaign Support

Many Members took strong exception to the frequently repeated suggestion that women do not support women in politics. Mrs. Ada Pritchard went on record in the Ontario Legislature last summer to the effect that this "myth" is "sheer nonsense".<sup>1</sup> The Members do not suggest that in the fight for the nomination women automatically command the support of their sex simply because they are women. Preferences, prejudices, and other party loyalties may apply at this stage. They all maintain, however, that once having been selected as a candidate their support has come from both men and women. Not only Canadian, but British experience indicates that voting patterns are not significantly affected by the fact that the candidate is a woman.<sup>2</sup> Probably as many people cross party lines to vote for a woman as desert their party to vote against her.

The women questioned did not ask for or receive official support from the national women's organizations of which they were members, recognizing that the National Council of Women,

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<sup>1</sup> Legislature of Ontario Debates, Thursday, July 18, 1968, p. 5976

<sup>2</sup> Austin Ranney, Pathways to Parliament. (Madison and Milwaukee, University of Wisconsin Press, 1965), p. 96.





Women's Institutes, Business and Professional Women's Club, and so on, are non-partisan. Only one Member suggested that it is a weakness of these organizations that they are unwilling to get involved in politics. They have developed no machinery for supporting women candidates.

#### Experience in Office

With two notable exceptions most women in both provincial and federal parliaments are quite definite that, once elected, they have met with no discrimination. They insist that their satisfactions and frustrations in office have nothing to do with the fact that they are women. Satisfactions come from being in a position to help individuals, the constituency, the region; to work for needed legislation; to see projects launched; to see "something concrete appear"; and to influence policy. Frustrations come from various sources; the cumbersome processes of government decision-making as compared with private business; or the universal frustrations of being in Opposition or of being back-benchers -- overcrowded offices, lack of adequate secretarial and research staff. One opposition Member finds great satisfaction in being in a position, at least two or three times in the session, to make the government listen. Conversely, her frustration is great when government leaders bury their replies to questions in lengthy accounts of their own accomplishments.



Most, but not all, Members replying feel that their capacities have been fully used in committee work. One felt she had to work hard to be an expert in order to move away from the traditional women's areas when it came to committee appointments. She also felt women were often not considered as potential chairmen of committees. The same woman, however, felt she had some advantages in having more time than the average man to follow through the problems of her constituents. One writes "I have served on the committees in which I had the greatest interest.... I have felt no disadvantage; in fact, I have been used as any man...I cannot possibly say that there was any discrimination against me."

Judy LaMarsh's comments leave a very different impression. As one of the only two women who could qualify as a member of the political elite as defined by John Porter,<sup>1</sup> her analysis leads to the conclusion that in politics today there is very little room at the top for women, and apparently not room for more than one at a time.<sup>2</sup> Her observations suggest that the disadvantages of being a woman in politics became more, rather than less, apparent from the vantage point of Cabinet office. One very considerable cause of frustration was the

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<sup>1</sup> Porter, op. cit., p. 386

<sup>2</sup> LaMarsh, op. cit., p. 292.



assumption among her colleagues that she naturally would act as the champion of women in all matters which were thought to concern them particularly. The role was distasteful to her and, added to her regular ministerial responsibilities, she found it an increasingly heavy burden.

Anyone interested in a more significant role for women in politics cannot but deplore the failure to make use of the outstanding capacity and qualifications of Dr. Pauline Jewett. The reasons for her non-appearance in the 1968 general election have not been discussed with her for this study, but there can be nothing but regret that a person with such patent ministerial potential was allowed by her party to remain on the sidelines.

#### Family and Professional Commitments

Members who have children make no attempt to gloss over the fact that it is extraordinarily difficult to combine family and parliamentary duties. Because of the hours they are required to sit, and because of the frequent and long-drawn-out absences from home, they certainly cannot function properly without full-time housekeepers. One provincial Member points out that her indemnity is not adequate for this, and urges that such expenses should be deductible from income for tax purposes. She is in agreement with another Member in a different part of the country who finds it extremely difficult to find properly trained housekeepers for this type of responsibility. This mother feels that supporting services such as day care and home-maker help are absolutely essential to the Member of Parliament, as they are





to all professional women. The married women replying indicate that their's would be an impossible role unless their husbands were enthusiastic in their support. Most of them believe that it is an impossible undertaking for a woman with young children. Those who have attempted it have generally been in provincial politics where sessions tend to be shorter and the seat of government not so far from home.

The wife and mother cannot leave her husband and children for seven or eight months of the year to serve in Ottawa. But, as one Member points out, neither can a single professional woman run for Parliament, be elected three or four times, suffer defeat, and return home, probably considerably poorer, and pick up where she left off. This problem is, of course, equally if not more compelling for the man with a family to support. A more adequate pension after years of service in the House might be a possible solution.



#### Search for Women Candidates

None of the women Members are prepared to give a straight affirmative answer to the question of whether their party makes a serious effort to find suitable women candidates. Several say that no parties try to find qualified women. One Member feels that if a qualified woman "turns up" her party will give her every opportunity to run. One believes that her party seeks people of proven ability and integrity, and women who qualify, she feels, would be given equal opportunity and receive the same support, financial and otherwise, as men. Another thinks that neither men nor women in her party have considered the question. One feels that her party has done more than others to encourage women candidates, but men are still likely to be thought of first. More than one suggest that an outstanding, well-known, well-qualified woman may be asked to run if she shows herself interested, but only if there is no strong male candidate available.

#### Separate Women's Party Organizations

Though nearly all the Members acknowledge gratefully the women party workers who helped to get them elected, most think that the women should be in the mainstream of the party, belonging, with the men, to one party organization. They feel that the men and women should work together, and that separate women's organizations should be dissolved. Committees of men and women can be set up to handle the work the women's organizations traditionally do in election campaigns. One suggests that it does no harm for a large city to have a women's association, as long as the women are also members of their riding associations.



No one sees the existing women's associations or committees as being effective in seeking out and encouraging potential women candidates.

#### General Comments and Suggestions

Analyzing the status of women in the Canadian political system, most of these women who are, and have been so close to the scene of action, play down the importance of discrimination. They recognize the very real barriers to political involvement presented by family responsibilities and professional demands. But their answer to the question "Why are there so few women in politics?" puts the responsibility largely at the door of women themselves.<sup>1</sup> Women are apathetic, uninterested, jealous of other women,<sup>2</sup> says one. Women lack education in public affairs, says another. Women think as they did a hundred years ago. Women are unwilling to become involved in the complexities of government, are afraid of discrimination, afraid of criticism, afraid of possible defeat, unwilling to sacrifice the time and money needed to run and to serve.

As to encouraging more women to enter politics one member stresses that they should not be encouraged unless, indeed, they are genuinely interested, aware of the demands, properly qualified, and expecting no special consideration. Simply to have more women involved is not enough.

<sup>1</sup> Judy LaMarsh takes strong exception to this view. She maintains that there are hundreds of women who would go into politics with some encouragement from the parties. The parties are not overtly discriminatory, she implies, but simply forget that women exist. Judy LaMarsh, *Op. cit.*, p.p. 283, 287.

<sup>2</sup> Only one used this argument. See. p. 41.





Some of the specific measures suggested to make it easier for women to become candidates have already been mentioned: day care facilities, homemaker services, more training courses for homemakers, <sup>more adequate</sup> pensions for ex-Members.

In general the Members do not believe in shortcuts or gimmicks to bring more women into politics. Setting an example is the most effective measure, one says. Those already in politics demonstrate that it can be done, and the numbers will increase naturally. The opportunity exists now.

Women can play a vital role in education for politics, suggests another. Mothers should encourage their families' interest in politics; should value Conversational Politics as well as Conversational French; should teach their families that it is every citizen's duty to give some time to public affairs; should expect to back up participation with financial support. They should also study, surround themselves with books and information on public affairs; stop thinking of themselves as women and start thinking of themselves as individuals. Women, she says, can do anything they decide to do. Another Member replying believes education is the only answer and education for politics must begin in the high schools.

Mrs. Ada Pritchard, in the Ontario Legislature, challenged the men and women of the political parties to seek out women and support them as candidates, nominate them in the ridings that can be won, and not only for hopeless seats already written off by the party organizers. Political parties must get more women into their ranks, not just at the tea-serving, door-knocking



level, but in the high-ranking offices from which the party's candidates are drawn. Women must take an interest and offer themselves for office. Governments must appoint more women to important boards and advisory committees.<sup>1</sup>

Mrs. Pritchard and at least two other Members urge women to begin their political careers at the local level in the communities in which they live. Concern for community problems and projects, service on the Board of Education, election to municipal council, are all possible without neglecting home and children. By the time the children are grown these women will have had valuable political training.

One experienced woman politician points out a contrast in the approach to politics as between men and women.

**For married women, she says, there is a natural progression** in the broadening of their interests. They begin with their immediate family and the particular environment in which they operate, and look beyond to the social conditions which affect that environment, to the interest of the community as a whole, to the regional and national values and policies which shape and alter the whole structure, and finally to the world situation in general. Men, on the other hand, begin with the general and work back to the individual and particular. This observer maintains that the fact that these two approaches so effectively complement each other provides the greatest argument for participation by both men and women in political decision-making.

<sup>1</sup> Legislature of Ontario Debates, July 18, 1968 pp. 5976-77.



### Women In The Senate

Since the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council ruling of October 18th, 1929, which opened the doors of the Canadian Senate to women, 9 women have been appointed. Four of these have retired or have died, and 5 are currently in office. Senator Cairine Reay Wilson of Ontario served from 1930 until her death in 1962. Senator Iva Campbell Fallis of Ontario served from 1935 to 1956. Senator Mariana Beauchamp Jodoin of Quebec served from 1953 to 1966, and Senator Nancy Hodges of British Columbia served from 1953 to 1965. Table XVI shows the number of Senatorial seats by provinces, and lists today's women Senators.

Clearly neither party has made use of appointments to the Senate to augment significantly the visibility of women in politics. Nine women Senators in forty years do not evidence any great conviction on the part of the political leaders that there should be more women in Parliament. ~~With the single exception of the most recent appointment~~ there has never been a woman Senator who was born in the twentieth century. This is not in any way to denigrate age and the wisdom that goes with it. Nor does it disparage the very useful function individual women Senators have fulfilled. It simply suggests that appointments have usually been made more with an eye to the past than as a part of any conscious plan for the future. There is certainly no system, either, to be deduced from the haphazard geographical selection: -- 3 from Ontario, 2 from Quebec, one each from Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, Manitoba, and British Columbia, and none ever from Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Saskatchewan, or Alberta.





It seems justifiable to conclude that appointments of women to the Senate, some of them excellent, have been made at the whim of Prime Ministers, for individual reasons, and without any considered plan or over-all view of a role for women in the Red Chamber.



Table XVI

Women in the Canadian Senate

January 1, 1969

<u>Province</u>	<u>Number of Senators</u>	<u>Women Senators</u>	<u>Date of Appointment</u>
Newfoundland	6		
Prince Edward Island	4	Hon. Florence Elsie Inman	1955
Nova Scotia	10		
New Brunswick	10	Hon. Muriel McQueen Fergusson	1953
Quebec	24	Hon. Josie Alice Dinan Quart	1960
Ontario	24	Hon. Mary Elizabeth Kinnear	1967
Manitoba	6	Hon. Olive Lillian Irvine	1960
Saskatchewan	6		
Alberta	6		
British Columbia	6		
<hr/>			
102			

Former Women Senators

Hon. Cairine Reay Wilson, Ontario, 1930-1962

Hon. Iva Campbell Fallis, Ontario, 1935-1956

Hon. Nancy Hodges, British Columbia, 1953-1965

Hon. Mariana Beauchamp Jodoin, Quebec, 1953-1966



In accordance with my instructions,  
I did not examine the participation  
of women in political activities in  
the Province of Quebec. General in-  
formation and statistics do not exclude  
Quebec, but no special studies were  
made, and no questionnaires sent out.

Anne H. Carver





## Chapter Two

### WOMEN IN MUNICIPAL POLITICS

#### Results of Survey

In the whole of Canada there were 4,625 municipalities at January 1, 1968, but 2,370 of these are very small units, not classified as cities, towns, or villages, and many of these are governed by provincially appointed administrators, not elected councillors. No official count exists, as far as I am aware, of the total number of elected municipal officials across Canada but, on the basis of such information as is available, a very rough estimate would put the figure at 12 or 13,000 at the least. To discover with accuracy how many of these councillors are women is a task beyond the resources of this study, but it has been possible to build up a list of approximately 300 women who were serving on some 225 councils at the beginning of 1968<sup>1</sup>. This is a remarkable increase over the year 1946, when only 48 women served on 46 of the 4,100 units of local government which then existed<sup>2</sup>. Though there is still much room for wider participation it is clear that, in the municipal field, women are playing an increasingly active and vital role,

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Based on women sitting on councils which are members of the Canadian Federation of Mayors and Municipalities and the list published in the May-June, 1968 issue of The Business and Professional Women, pp. 33-44.

2

Cleverdon, op cit., p. 268, quoting an article by Charlotte Whitton, "Is the Canadian Woman a Flop in Politics," Saturday Night, January 26, 1946.



and it has seemed important to give a special degree of attention to this area of politics.

For obvious reasons some of the barriers in the path of greater participation by women in provincial and federal politics are absent, or at least less formidable, at the municipal level. The action is going on where the women are, in their own communities, and the question of mobility, today almost insoluble for a married woman with a young family, does not apply. The amount of time involved, though considerable and demanding, especially in larger urban communities, is not absolutely prohibitive. In time spent, the councillor's job is comparable with the volunteer responsibilities or professional work loads carried by many married women outside their homes.

The best source of information about municipal politics is clearly the women who are themselves involved. The following letter and questionnaire therefore were sent out to 294<sup>1</sup> women mayors, aldermen and councillors in an attempt to find out what sort of people they are, why they decided to enter politics, how they got there, what their experience has been, and the boundaries of their political ambitions. Questionnaires were answered by 161 women, or 54% of the total list to whom they were sent.

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Councillors in the Province of Quebec were not included.





ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE STATUS  
OF WOMEN IN CANADA

COMMISSION ROYALE D'ENQUÊTE SUR LA SITUATION  
DE LA FEMME AU CANADA

P.O. BOX 2520  
Postal Station "D"  
Ottawa

C.P. 2520  
Succursale postale "D"  
Ottawa

June, 1968

I have been asked by the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada to undertake a study of the participation of women in political activities in Canada.

While I am concerned with all three levels of government, I am particularly interested in municipal councils since more women have found it possible to play an active part at this level than in the provincial and federal parliaments.

I would like to be able to throw some light on the reasons which lead women to enter municipal politics, and the routes by which they get there. Many of us become deeply involved in organizations which seek to influence municipal governments to undertake particular programmes, but comparatively few of us seem prepared to take the decisive step of seeking election.

May I enlist your help in this study and ask you to answer the questions on the enclosed sheets. Please do not regard this as a formal questionnaire, but rather as a guide to the type of information I require. I would be most grateful if you would expand your comments in any area that interests you. I am looking for impressions and attitudes rather than statistical data.

Your replies will, of course, be regarded as confidential.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. H.S.M. Carver





ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN CANADA

Study on participation of women in municipal politics

1. Age.

Under forty

Over forty

2. Marital Status.

Are you married?

If so, have you children?

What are their ages?

Have you help at home?

What kind? (For example, a relative, or baby sitter)

Paid household help?

3. Education.

University?

Professional school?

Other?

Degrees and diplomas?

What subjects did you specialize in?

Did any part of your education contribute specifically to your interest in politics?

4. Profession.

What has been your occupation or experience before entering municipal politics?

What have been your major interests in the community? (For example, education, social work, housing.)

5. Route to election.

What circumstances and motives led you to seek election? (For example, have other members of your family been interested in, or engaged in politics?)

Did you have an interest in a particular program which you wanted to follow through?

Do you think men and women enter municipal politics for much the same reasons? If not, why do you think men enter?

Are you aware of any factors which make it particularly difficult for women in the field?

Is it difficult to fit your municipal council responsibilities into your pattern of family responsibilities?

Have you suggestions or comments which would be helpful to other women interested in running for office?

In your area, are there often women candidates?

Are women usually elected, if they run?



ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN CANADA

Study on participation of women in municipal politics - page two

6. Experience in office.

How long have you held office?

Have you ever been defeated?

What have been your special concerns in office? (For example, what committees have you worked on?)

Can you comment on some of your satisfactions and frustrations in office?

Are you likely to run again?

7. Provincial and federal politics.

Would you be interested in running for election to the provincial or federal parliaments?

If not, why?

Have you been an active worker in one of the party organizations?

Name

Address



The material collected is fascinating. Replies range broadly in tone and flavour. At one extreme are the straight-forward answers of councillors in small rural communities simply pulling their weight in running their local affairs — "No grandiose plans, just everyday administration". Many of these judge themselves not qualified to operate at other levels of politics — "Let's face it, I haven't got what it takes". At the other extreme are the politically sophisticated mayors and councillors, perhaps of heavily populated urban communities, some of whom have been candidates in provincial and federal elections, have held high office in the provincial and national party organizations, have served on provincial and federal government boards or commissions, or as delegates to the United Nations.

#### Where are Canada's Women Municipal Councillors Serving?

The study indicates a concentration of women in municipal politics from Ontario westward. A provincial breakdown is given in Table XVII. Alberta leads with the largest number of women in office (68). The largest number of replies were received from Ontario (41). In all the Atlantic provinces together only 27 women are known to hold elected municipal office, and only 8 replied to the questionnaire. In all, 84 replies came from women in urban centres, while 77 answering serve in rural areas. Thirty-three of the 41 Ontario women replying represent urban communities, while in Saskatchewan, 24 of the 31 women are on rural councils.

#### Age, Marital Status, Children and Household Help

Are our women councillors young or middle-aged, married or





TABLE XVII

PROVINCE	POPULATION (1966 Census)	No. of local and regional municipi- palities, Jan. 1, 1968*	Questionnaires Sent	Replies Received		
				Total	Urban	Rural
British Columbia	1,873,674	165	47	29 [61%]	15	14
Alberta	1,463,203	372	68	37 [54%]	16	21
Saskatchewan	955,344	803	55	31 [56%]	7	24
Manitoba	963,066	214	33	12 [36%]	5	7
Ontario	6,960,870	964	64	41 [64%]	33	8
Quebec	5,780,845	1726	-	-	-	-
New Brunswick	616,788	114	2	1 [50%]	8	3
Prince Edward I	108,535	30	2	1 [50%]		
Nova Scotia	756,039	66	7	4 [57%]		
Newfoundland	493,396	164	16	5 [31%]		
Yukon	14,382	3	-	-	-	-
Northwest Terr.	28,738	4	-	-	-	-
CANADA	20,014,880	4,625	294	161	84	77

\* Based on D.B.S. data





single? Have they children? Have they household help? The answers to our questionnaire show that women who enter municipal politics tend to wait until their children are old enough to be relatively independent. One hundred and thirty-nine of the 161 women replying are over 40 years of age. Only 20 are under 40. Two did not give their age.

The breakdown by provinces follows:

	<u>Over 40</u>	<u>Under 40</u>	<u>No Comment</u>	<u>Total</u>
British Columbia	27	2		29
Alberta	27	9	1	37
Saskatchewan	25	6		31
Manitoba	11		1	12
Ontario	38	3		41
New Brunswick )				1
Prince Edward Island )				1
Nova Scotia )	11			4
Newfoundland )				5
Total	139	20	2	161

One hundred and twenty-nine women are married, 25 are widows, 6 unmarried, and one is divorced. Fifty-two of the women have children under 15 years of age. The answers elicited the information that only 46 of the women report having paid household help (although many acknowledge helpful husbands and families). The breakdown by province is shown in Table XVIII.

#### Education

What sort of educational background do these women have? Thirty-eight of the councillors replying have university education. Twenty trained as teachers and 16 as nurses, while only one reports a degree in law. Thirty-nine mention taking some type of business



course. Eleven mention other special fields of study, including dietetics, music, art, and social work. Forty-six report no special training. When asked to comment on whether their formal education contributed specifically to their interest in politics, only 24 answered "yes". Table XIX shows the provincial breakdown of the educational information.

#### Occupations and Professions

What have the councillors been doing before entering municipal politics? Besides running their homes and raising their families, women councillors across the country report their involvement in a great variety of professions and occupations. Among the descriptions they apply to their roles are farmer, farmer's wife, rancher's wife; doctor, nurse, teacher, lawyer, deaconess; business women, garage owner and operator, storekeeper (hardware, general store, pharmacy), real estate agent, travel agency owner, medical secretary, drug dispenser for Indian Health Services; postmaster, postal worker; former airline stewardess, Brides' Counsel; boarding house operator, taxi driver; newspaper correspondent, women's page editor, writer, free-lance artist, radio and television commentator, book publisher.

#### Community Involvement

What have been their interests outside their professions and businesses? Almost without exception councillors demonstrate wide involvement in community affairs as part of their experience before entering politics. They have been members of, and very frequently executive officers in, all manner of community organizations and municipal committees having to do with health, welfare,



Table XVIII

	<u>Married</u>	<u>Single</u>	<u>Widowed</u>	<u>Divorced</u>	<u>Women with Children under 15</u>	<u>Occas. paid help</u>
British Columbia	23	2	3	1	7	6
Alberta	28	1	8		11	10
Saskatchewan	26	1	4		14	5
Manitoba	9		3		4	0
Ontario	34	2	5		11	20
New Brunswick )						
Prince Edward Island )						
Nova Scotia )	9		2		5	5
Newfoundland )	—	—	—	—	—	—
	129	6	25	1	52	46

Table XIX

	<u>University</u>	<u>Nursing</u>	<u>Teaching</u>	<u>Business</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>No Special Training</u>
British Columbia	11	2	5	9	2	6
Alberta	9	2	5	11	1	10
Saskatchewan	2	3	6	7		14
Manitoba	1			1	1	10
Ontario	10	5	4	10	6	3
New Brunswick )						
Prince Edward Island )						
Nova Scotia )	5	4		1	1	3
Newfoundland )	—	—	—	—	—	—
	38	16	20	39	11	46

(Totals do not add up to 161, as some women have more than one type of training.)  
Of the women reporting that their education contributed to their interest in politics,  
there were 2 in B.C., 6 in Alta., 5 in Sask., 1 in Man., and 10 in Ont.





recreation, education, and planning. The following list of some of the organizations mentioned in their replies indicates the wide range of their interests:

Education

Home and School Association  
Parent-Teacher Association  
School Board  
University Board of Governors  
Royal Commission on Education, Provincial

Youth Work

Girl Guides  
Boy Scouts  
Cubs  
CGIT  
4-H Club  
Canadian Conference on Children  
Family and Children's Court  
Committee on Human Rights for Children

Housing and Community Planning

Community Planning Association  
Planning Board  
Board of Senior Citizens Housing Project

Health and Welfare

Hospital Board  
Public Health Board  
Service Clubs  
Welfare Council  
Red Cross  
Children's Aid Society  
Community Chest  
St. John's Ambulance  
Alcoholism and Drug Addiction Research Foundation  
Canadian National Institute for the Blind



Church Work

United Church Women  
Women's Auxiliary, Anglican  
Board of Stewards, United Church  
Anglican Girls  
Junior Choir

Women's Groups

Local Council of Women  
Ladies Auxiliary, Royal Canadian Legion  
Homemakers Club  
I.O.D.E.  
University Women's Club  
Business and Professional Women's Club  
Canadian Club  
Women's Institute  
B'nai B'rith  
Women's Press Club  
Farm Women

Business, Agriculture and Economics

Chamber of Commerce  
Board of Trade  
Farmer's Union  
Co-operative Union  
B.C. Aviation Council  
International Typographical Union  
Consumers Association of Canada

Other

Centennial Committee  
Citizenship Council  
Library Board  
Music Festival Committee  
Rate-payers Association  
Historical and Scientific Association



### Route to Election

The background, education, occupation, and interests of the councillors replying are similar to those of thousands of active, public-spirited women across Canada. The next group of questions attempted to discover what made these particular women take the decisive step which differentiates them from the crowd. Why, in fact, did they run for council? About one-third of the councillors (54) reported that they were influenced by the example of close relatives who had been actively involved in municipal or other levels of politics. Forty-three women offered the information that they were specifically pressed to run by groups of their fellow citizens. Only a very few suggested that they ran in order to see one special project accomplished, or some one particular municipal proposal of action stopped or reversed. For example: One woman wanted to stop a new industry from being located too close to a housing project. One wanted to take specific action to improve conditions in the community's trailer camp. One gave as her interest "human progress" and ran for office because she wanted to help stir the lost pride of the Indian -- "to make them want to do things once more". She writes: "I was deeply sad when I first realized how Indian Affairs treated Band Council -- like children." One young doctor with two children reports she was "forced unwillingly" into municipal affairs because she wanted to follow through garbage, water and sewerage programs which were of vital impor-





tance to the people's health. "I think anyone who enters municipal politics for any reason other than a crying need for things to be done must be insane!"

Most women gave general reasons for running: pride in their town; desire to see their community develop and its services improve; concern about the apathy of their fellow citizens; a wish to improve the calibre of council members and council procedures; a desire to spark interest among women in the government of their communities; to break the ice and encourage other women to run for office; a wish to make productive use of free time. Several women wrote that they decided they should run for office themselves and try to do something to improve conditions, instead of constantly finding fault with existing council.

Against this general background, many women named the programs which they felt demanded priority treatment by council. Here the connection with their previous community commitments is very clear. They wanted to see, for example:

- Improvement in education and schools
- More kindergartens
- Better libraries
- Better municipal understanding of school policies and financing
- Community planning, town planning and zoning
- Urban renewal and slum clearance
- Housing in general
- Housing for senior citizens
- Recreational facilities and parks
- Town clean-up and beautification
- New buildings
- Better garbage disposal
- Rat control
- Water and sewer systems



- Paving of roads
- Better cemeteries
- Improved ambulance service
- Better hospital and health services
- A fire-truck for the community
- Anti-pollution programs
- Child and family courts
- A new detention home
- After-school programs for children
- A meat inspection program
- A by-law against green stamps
- Saving the historic Town Hall from demolition

One councillor frankly admitted no interest in serving her community, but considerable interest in making a little money in her spare time! Another women said "a trip overseas after the last war made me realize how fortunate we Canadians are. Decided everyone must contribute something." A woman reporter for a newspaper, whose "beat" was municipal council meetings, was so shocked by the mismanagement of council meetings and the careless way decisions were made that she decided she should run for council herself. (When elected, she urged council to introduce some sort of order into the meetings but was told "we never had an agenda before you came and we don't need it now".) Several women replying were interested in sensible financial programs, to see that money was spent to the best advantage for the village, and to try to hold the tax rate for those living on a fixed income.

#### Do Men and Women Enter Municipal Politics for Different Reasons?

Nearly two-thirds of the councillors think that men and women enter municipal politics for the same reasons. The rest suspect



differences in approach and suggest that men may be seeking prestige, and advancement in their own careers in business or politics. A few women note with disapproval a tendency among some members of their own sex to pursue one goal exclusively in council. They believe men are right in taking a more general point of view. Others point out that no two human beings, male or female, do anything for quite the same reasons.

#### Difficulties Faced in Municipal Office

Is it difficult to fit municipal council responsibilities into the pattern of family demands? Very few of the women with families found serious difficulties in fitting their council duties into their family life. Some commented on having to give up outside social activities, others on having to be prepared to work long hours, but many commented on their extremely understanding husbands and families who made their double role possible without too much disruption of home life. Some actually pointed out that they were freer than their husbands to undertake municipal duties. One or two found their professional responsibilities, rather than family duties, clashed with council work.

Do our councillors find other difficulties in carrying out their municipal responsibilities because they are women? Fully half of the councillors replying acknowledge no peculiar difficulties. Others are prepared to talk about problems, which they





see arising from three sources. First is the attitude of women electors. Some, though by no means a majority of the councillors, complain of jealousy, distrust, lack of or limited support from women of the community. Women will vote for a woman councillor but say "the Mayor should be a man". Women, some councillors say, may consider a woman in municipal politics a "queer", a "freak", or "some kind of a nut". Second are the attitudes, real or imagined, of male colleagues. A number of councillors suggest that many men feel superior to women, or think that women's place is in the home; that men do not like to take direction from women; that men doubt women's competence and knowledge and ability to make decisions; that a certain amount of derision from male colleagues is to be expected. Finally, there is the woman councillor's own lack of confidence. Some admit to feeling at a disadvantage because they are outnumbered by men. A few have to overcome an ingrained feeling that men are supposed to be more capable, but learn from experience that men make just as many mistakes.

There are many interesting comments on the difficulties faced: "Few husbands want wives in this capacity." "Women are inclined to be martyrs — if they contribute through lodges, volunteer work, etc., they never let you forget it." "Much too much pettiness at meetings— compared to Council of Women, council meetings are ridiculously handled." "I could write a book about this, but think it is mostly because of the poor image of the average woman as portrayed in the 'media of communication'," and "The North American image of women and what constitutes femininity".



Suggestions for Aspirants to Municipal Office

Most of the councillors offer suggestions to other women who may be considering entering municipal politics. Many are lively and full of hard commonsense; some are tinged with cynicism: "First run for school board or hospital board." "I have found out that women can accomplish an enormous amount if they expect no credit and see that men are given all the credit." "Jump in at the deep end and swim for dear life!" "Be well-informed -- learn what the charter permits council to do. Be a good listener -- don't feel that you have to do all the talking. Don't just pursue one cause -- serve on all committees, not just health." "Keep up your interest in civic affairs while raising your children." "Let adverse criticism run off your shoulders 'as a shower of rain'. Most women are not willing to accept this criticism, especially in the newspapers." "Expect no favours because you are female. Better to be 'one of the boys' than 'one of the girls'." "On a vote, sex doesn't matter!" "Learn to speak loud enough -- women's voices are often hard to hear." "Make your decisions and discussions on well-documented facts, not on emotions." "Never fence-sit -- follow through when mind is made up." "Be informed, read and study." "It takes about a year to find out what is going on, so don't make rash promises and don't (like women both in and out of office) be quick to answer questions without enough thought and research." "Don't feel inferior to men." "Don't be too sensitive." "Don't expect special treatment because you are a woman." "Don't sit back and let the men take over."



### Experience in Office

Once elected, women across Canada appear to serve on all types of municipal committees. Some complain that there is a tendency for their male colleagues to try to restrict them to committees thought "suitable" for women, such as education, health, and welfare. But most women councillors resist this and appear to overcome the barriers, for we find them on the Finance Committee, Police Committee, Public Works Committee, areas sometimes thought to be the special preserves of the men. It is noteworthy that women, especially in British Columbia and Ontario, are frequently committee chairmen. An alderman writes, "I think the most interesting aspect, as the one woman on council, is that I have been given the so-called male portfolios, i.e., chairman of the Industrial Development Commission ... chairman of the Official Traffic Commission, director of the Downtown Parking Corporation, representative on the ... Aviation Council, whereas the male aldermen are chairman of the Health and Welfare, Housing, etc., committees."

### Frustrations in Office

Many of the frustrations voiced by councillors have to do with council's relations with higher levels of government. Councillors complain of lack of freedom for local initiative and lack of finances for local programs. Municipal politics, says one councillor, are too limited in scope.

"After hours of careful planning on a project the Ontario Municipal Board steps in and says you can't do it — even after indicating that it should be done."





"Archaic municipal act and red tape involved in getting a job done ---"

"A provincial government that will not modernize the Municipal Act and take enough advantage of federal assistance."

"Red tape in housing -- too many levels of government are involved, especially provincial."

Councillors are also frustrated by the slow pace of change and the high cost of delay. Several complain that the news media are inaccurate and unfair, and give so little coverage to council business that the public is not properly informed. The most frequently voiced frustration is public apathy in general, and the tendency of citizens to speak up only when they have complaints and to blame council for all the problems of the town. "You need," one woman says, "the hide of a rhinoceros, the patience of a saint, and the disposition of an angel."

One councillor's frustration is "my own lack of education", and another's, that there are "only twenty-four hours to every day".

### Satisfactions of Office

The general impression from the 161 councillors responding is not, however, one of frustration and complaint. On the contrary, the mood is one of enormous enthusiasm and interest. Let the women speak of their satisfactions for themselves:

"Satisfactions all the way." "Challenging and interesting."  
"I find it challenging and different. What a change from working with women's groups!"





"Wonderful experience. I have found no discrimination against a woman in the council."

"Extremely rewarding as you are in the center of things and can accomplish anything you want." "It is possible to institute almost any program you feel strongly enough about."

"Enormous satisfaction out of understanding budgets, procedures and people — out of working with a team — and a certain (small) amount of pleasure in being 'someone'!"

"Complete strangers who stop you in the street to offer support."

"Bringing down a regime that had gone on too long."

"I like the give and take and parry and thrust of politics."

"The weekly newspaper prints minutes of every meeting. A well-informed public is an interested public."

"Comforting to know in yourself that you've done your best when gripes come in."

"I have found the work interesting and very educational. It will certainly help me to understand the many problems facing government at all levels, as well as see some of the reasons for higher taxation. I also feel this experience teaches me the need for more educated individuals in government."

"Particularly rewarding in recreation to have a revitalization, and some changes that were opposed at first but have worked out amazingly well."



The satisfactions voiced at seeing things get done are tremendous: the new town hall is built; water and sewers go in; the town is cleaned up; the senior citizens' lodge is operating; the drop-in centre for Metis and Indians opens its doors; the addition to the hospital is under way. As one councillor put it: "Have built three miles of roads that are my pride and joy," and another claims triumphantly, "By next year the whole town will be black-topped!"

#### Success of Women Candidates in General

The answers to the questions "In your area are there often women candidates?" and "Are women usually elected if they run?" proved to be difficult to assess, as many women replying were the first to stand for office in their communities. However, when women do run for office, the majority replying felt that their chances of being elected are extremely good.

#### Length of Service in Municipal Politics

Of the 161 women replying, only 35 have ever been defeated. One hundred and nine of the women have been in office between one and five years; 34 between six and ten; and 18 ten years or over. One hundred and seven say that they are likely to run for office again. Table XX shows the provincial breakdown.

#### Interest in Involvement in Other Levels of Politics

Slightly more than half of the municipal councillors say that they have been active workers in one of the party organizations.



Forty-three would be interested in running for provincial or federal election. One hundred and two say that they are not interested, the rest did not comment. Those who would not run give as their reasons their lack of education and experience (26), age, or state of health (19), family responsibilities (19), government employment (1), and satisfaction in and preference for their work at the local level (22). Twelve women are unwilling because they would not want to commit themselves to a party, valuing the independence they experience in municipal politics where they can make decisions based on their own judgment. The balance gave no reason for their decision. The breakdown follows.

	<u>Have been party workers</u>	<u>Interested in running for Provincial or Federal Election</u>	
		Yes	No
British Columbia	14	11	11
Alberta	16	9	23
Saskatchewan	14	4	27
Manitoba	7	4	8
Ontario	32	11	27
New Brunswick )			
Prince Edward Is. )	6	4	6
Nova Scotia )			
Newfoundland )			
	<u>89</u>	<u>43</u>	<u>102</u>

TABLE XX

	<u>1-5 years</u>	<u>6-10 years</u>	<u>over 10 years</u>	<u>Defeats</u>	<u>Would run again</u>
British Columbia	22	4	3	9	20
Alberta	29	7	1	5	23
Saskatchewan	25	3	3	2	22
Manitoba	8	2	2	3	7
Ontario	19	13	9	15	27
New Brunswick )					
Prince Edward Is. )					
Nova Scotia )	6	5		1	8
Newfoundland )					
	<u>109</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>35</u>	<u>107</u>





Men and Women Councillors Compared

To develop a standard against which to assess the replies of women councillors, the same questionnaire, slightly amended, was sent to 198 men council members across Canada, with the following covering letter:

Dear Sir:

I am working on a study for the Royal Commission on the Status of Women concerning the participation of women in political activities in Canada. In the course of my research I have sent out the attached questionnaire to some 300 elected municipal officials who are women. The response has been excellent, and the information provided most valuable.

To make full use of this material, however, it is necessary to ask the same questions of a representative sample of elected municipal officials who are men. It is clearly important to know whether the replies of women to these questions differ significantly from the replies of men.

Will you help us by filling out the questionnaire and returning it to the Commission? I would, of course, be very glad if you would expand your comments in any area that interests you. Your reply will, of course, be regarded as confidential.

The mailing list was worked out with the Federation of Mayors and Municipalities, based on a random selection from their roster of members in all provinces except Quebec. (It will be remembered that we did not send questionnaires to women councillors in Quebec.) The fact that only 320 of 4,625 municipalities are members of the Federation should not, it was felt, seriously affect the usefulness of the sample.

In fact, the returns from men revealed no very startling differences. Seventy-one mayors and councillors responded, approximately 36 % of those questioned. Their replies to questions are brief, where possible merely a "yes" or "no". This is explained



by the fact that they are answering a request for help in a study to do with women and also, presumably, because they do not regard their position on a municipal council as in any way out of the ordinary or needing special explanation. The comparatively greater enthusiasm of the women's replies has an obvious connection with the freshness of breaking new ground.

The men are younger than the women, 27% being under forty years old. In the case of women, it was only 12 %. More of them, oddly enough, admit to having paid help at home. A higher proportion (though not markedly so) had university or specialized professional training. Their interests prior to running are slightly more professional and business-oriented than the women's. They cite membership in service clubs rather than in social agencies. Most of them gave general reasons for entering municipal politics. Most of them think men and women enter politics for the same reasons. Many of them think home and family ties must make life difficult for women councillors. Most of them have no special advice for women aspirants to municipal office. Those ready to give advice usually urge women to run, but some warn them to do so only if they have enough time to do the job properly. But one man's advice was "Forget it", and another's "Don't run". Many men reply that women in their area are usually elected if they run. One comments "Yes, if they are good-looking and well-known", but adds, honestly, "the same applies to men".

There is no significant difference in the length of time served on council by men and women, nor in the number of defeats they have suffered.



Men are much less voluble than women on their experience, frustrations and satisfactions in office.

A higher percentage of men would like to run for federal or provincial office. Those who don't wish to are either "not interested" or say they cannot afford it. Over half report they have been active workers for a political party.

### Women Councillors as People

It is unfortunate that statistical analysis cannot do justice to the vivid impression of many effective and capable women which the confidential returns provide. Having sorted them and added them up, one would like to put them back together as individual people and let them speak for themselves. Perhaps a few sketches of this sort are in order.

One distinguished Mayor of an urban municipality tells how she first got into politics through her involvement with the children in her neighbourhood, where houses were modest and families large. The local pre-schoolers' interest in her books and pictures and piano developed into a kindergarten in her living room. Home and School Association pressed her to run for school board and work for kindergartens in the school system. From school board she moved to council, and in council she rose to be Mayor. It is her opinion that women, more thin-skinned than men, sense that they cannot pursue a career in public life without being changed by it. This is a risk few are willing to take. She herself would view with alarm the prospect of a municipal council dominated by women. They have still to learn, she says, to be less "womanish". Her total commitment to her job and her complete satisfaction in it make her uninterested in seeking election in provincial and





federal parliaments.

The Mayor of another community, with 13 years of experience in council behind her, would agree that women are too often emotional, personally insulted if people do not agree with them, and unable to accept criticism. Perhaps her earlier experience as a teacher gave her a certain imperviousness here herself. She admits to disenchantment with party politics. "I could never believe that any party was always right, and the other completely wrong," she writes: "I often wish we could run our country as we run a business, with the best brains of both parties in constructive criticism rather than 'knock', 'knock'." On the verge of retirement, she pays tribute to her husband for his "13 most tolerant years".

By way of contrast we might look at two women, one from the West and one from the East, who find themselves in municipal councils mainly as a result of their interest in housing, slum clearance, urban renewal, and city planning. One of them first came face to face with housing needs in her community while helping new immigrants establish themselves after the war. In the intervening years she has worked consistently through every channel open to her, whether public or private, to get more housing in her community for low income groups and senior citizens. Having explored the limits of existing legislation, these women are concerned with policy. They would be interested in higher levels of government, but only if they could be in a position to influence policy. The role of the backbencher has no appeal for them.





One of them, though she has commanded a very large vote at the municipal level, is pessimistic about a woman getting the nomination at the provincial or federal level in a constituency where there is any chance of success in winning a seat.

As proponents of the general view, rather than a narrow interest in municipal politics, we could pick two aldermen who also come from widely separated parts of Canada but have much in common. Their style is mature, reflecting perhaps the confidence that springs from their being well-qualified professionals in their own fields. One is a teacher, and one is a business woman with university training in economics and history. One has served for 16 years, the other for 13, and both have found it most interesting and stimulating work. Both have been active in politics at the provincial level. In a general election one sought but failed to win her party's nomination. (Too many men, she says, seem to think this their field.) The other was defeated as a candidate for provincial election. Both are critical of people who go into politics to pursue one cause exclusively. One writes "I do not believe that one should seek election only to secure implementation of a specific plan. A council needs all-round interest and ability, and when seeking election you should be prepared to serve the whole area to the best of your ability in the widest possible sense."

Councillors who have run for election federally are naturally of special interest. Two women with impressive qualifications, one a Liberal and one a Progressive Conservative, were candidates in the 1965 general election, but were defeated. One is a for-



mer secondary school teacher and has served in municipal government for 14 years as councillor and controller. Her community interests were broadly based -- University Women's Club, Board of Health, social welfare agencies, music and theatre. In her first, but only her first campaign, she was sponsored by the Local Council of Women. The only difficulty she sees for women in municipal politics is their own hesitation to dive in and try. Is this due to a fear of rejection, she asks, or to a lack of confidence which has been cultivated by the training and attitudes of home and community? The other defeated federal candidate is a career woman with a background in home economics, journalism, and the real estate business. Her list of the community enterprises in which she has been involved is monumental. She has found acceptance as an equal from the business community. It is other women, she says, who are discriminatory. One of her interests has been a Youth Forum through which young people of her city meet and discuss city problems and programs with city officials.

One very articulate alderman serving her first term as the only woman ever elected in her community finds council work more often clashes with her professional responsibilities as a teacher than with her domestic ties. She writes, "Women in politics are generally treated with a sort of amused tolerance such as might be given to a precocious child." She feels that people very often vote for or against a woman because she is a woman, not because of her qualities as a person or because of her ability.



Women, she thinks, are treated as representatives of their whole sex and people "tend to generalize about us much as they do about minority groups. One drunken Indian brands his whole race. One delinquent child of a working mother proves that we should all spend our lives in a kitchen." She wants most of all to be judged as a councillor good or bad, not as a woman councillor.

There is a special appeal in a return from one alderman of seven years' standing. She married a farmer forty years ago, but the depression made it necessary to find another way of making a living. She bought a general retail store and ran it for 27 years — quite an education in itself, she says. Her father did not think girls needed education to be better homemakers, so she had not been allowed to go to school after the mandatory 8th grade. From early childhood she was taught that men are superior, and it takes a long time to un-learn this lesson. But in business she found that she had capable, dependable women workers, and some stupid and inefficient ones. She had capable and dependable male workers, and some stupid and inefficient ones. Her own daughters were as good students as her sons. Her confidence now springs from her conviction not that she is superior, but that men make as many mistakes as women. Like many other intelligent councillors she views men and women as individuals, all motivated by different reasons regardless of their sex. She is interested in anything which is for the good of the community, and especially in education, because her own was so limited.







One would like to describe them all in detail: -- the alderman who looks with affection but a clear eye at most of the women she knows, and admits she would not vote for any of them; the young mother of two boys who realizes so clearly that something more than lessons in history and types of government is needed in the schools to make both boys and girls aware of what their responsibility as citizens will involve; the 48-year-old mother of 8 children who reports that last year, besides serving as alderman, she was on the school board, helped in the kindergarten, was a newspaper correspondent, was president of two ladies' clubs, and was researching a book and compiling the local history; the many individualistic councillors who resist generalizations about a "woman's point of view", or classification of certain council work as "suitable for women"; the councillor who feels that "often there are issues discussed after the meeting by the men over a drink! I don't feel I always get all the information they do in this way"; the Mayor whose husband's friends call him "Prince Philip", and the councillor who apologized for a late reply because "a bout with surgery and good luck in the Irish sweepstakes have kept me away from my regular routine".

We heard from twelve mayors, several deputy mayors, two reeves and an overseer. Ten of the councillors replying had been candidates in provincial and federal elections, and many more were truly "political" women in the best sense. In municipal politics women are doing a job for which they are well qualified; in which



they are proving themselves capable; which they can handle without neglecting their families, although this is hard work; and in which it is possible for them to rise to a position of leadership and authority.



### Chapter Three

#### WOMEN IN POLITICS IN OTHER COUNTRIES

The number of Canadian women in politics compares unfavourably with that of many European countries, most markedly with the U.S.S.R. and with the Scandinavian countries. But comparisons with Great Britain and the U.S.A. are not so much to Canada's disadvantage as one might have feared. Australia and New Zealand started earlier, but have made no more progress than Canada. Other Commonwealth countries have such a different political background that statistics are hardly comparable.

Eastern Europe. The relevance to Canadian women of the experience of the U.S.S.R. and other eastern European countries within the Soviet sphere of influence is perhaps questionable, but it is interesting that statistics for 1966 show that women delegates to the Supreme Council of the U.S.S.R. constitute 28% of the total number. Women delegates to the local councils exceed 42% of the total. Some 27% of the members of executive committees of municipal councils are women. There are women on the Council of Ministers, and also women ministers in the governments of the union republics.<sup>1</sup>

Figures for other eastern European countries are only slightly less impressive. In Yugoslavia women in the

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<sup>1</sup> Kamila Chylinska, "Political Activity of Women in Eastern Europe." Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, January, 1968, p. 71.





federal parliament reach almost 20%. In Rumania there are 67 women members of parliament and 40,000 women in local councils. In Bulgaria a woman is Deputy Chairman of the parliament and six others out of 71 members have reached high office. On local councils, 20% are women. Hungary has a women chairman of the parliament, and 65 women members. Local councils have 18,000 women members, and 141 are council chairmen. In all these countries there is a large proportion, sometimes a majority, of women acting as judges of the municipal, local and national courts.

Scandinavia. The similarity of background between Canada and the Scandinavian countries makes comparison here far more telling. Reasons for the much greater political participation of women in Sweden, Finland, Denmark, and Norway should be further explored. Women in these countries have had political equality only slightly longer than Canadian women (Finland since 1906, Norway since 1909, Denmark since 1915, and Sweden only since 1919) but their involvement is markedly greater. In Sweden 15 of the 151 member Senate are women, and 34 of 132 members of the Chamber (about 25%). A woman is chairman of the Permanent Legislative Commission of the Senate and there are three women ministers. Women are active and influential in the political parties. In Finland 34 (17%) of the 200 members of parliament are women. Women are also active in municipal politics, particularly in urban areas. In Helsinki 28% of



local elected officials are women. In Denmark the current percentage of women in parliament is about 11%, with 2 women ministers. In Norway 10% of the members of parliament are women, as are the ministers of justice and of consumer affairs.

Other European Countries. Experience in other European countries is less impressive. In Germany, the Bundestag has 43 women members, about 8%. There are 3 women ministers in provincial governments. Participation of women is less in Austria (16 women in parliament), Belgium (6 out of 390) and Italy (4%). Dutch women do rather better with 4 women in the First and 15 in the Second Chamber. Greece, Spain and Portugal have made less progress. In Switzerland women do not have the vote at the federal level. Only 4 cantons out of 25 have universal suffrage.

French women, though greatly concerned with political equality over many years, did not win the vote until 1944. Since that time the number of women elected has decreased depressingly, from 40 deputies in 1946 to 11 in 1967, only 2% of the members. In 1946 there were 23 women senators, and today only 5. Only 32 out of a possible 3000 members of departmental assemblies are women. Women are more in evidence at the municipal level. There are 11,145 women municipal council members out of a total of 463,408. There are 421 women mayors out of 38,000. French women do not often reach the upper ranks of the political parties.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Marcelle Stanislas Devaud, "Political Participation of Western European Women." Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, January 1968, pp. 61-66.



U.S.A.        Since the British and American political systems are the most closely connected both by tradition and influence with Canada's, examination of their experience provides a relevant and useful basis against which to measure women's participation in politics in Canada.

Since 1920, when American women achieved political equality with men, there have been a total of 10 women Senators and 66 women members of the House of Representatives. In the 91st Congress only 2% of the members are women -- one among the 100 senators, and 10 of the 435 members of the House of Representatives. Only one of the 11 women is a newcomer. Mrs. Shirley Chisholm of Brooklyn, New York, was elected for the first time in November 1968, the first Negro woman to sit in the House of Representatives. In all, 27 women candidates ran in the November congressional elections, 12 Democrats, 8 Republicans, and 7 women from minor parties. The number of women in Congress has declined since 1961-1962, when there were 19. As in Canada, a number of the women (one authority says a majority) have entered Congress by following their deceased husbands.

Once elected, however, more women members of Congress appear to hold their seats through several elections than perhaps is the case in the Canadian House of Commons. Several of the women running in November 1968 had had previous experience in state legislatures. Many of those standing for re-election had served as chairmen of Congressional Committees.



There are approximately 9,400 seats in the 50 state legislatures. Nearly 350 women are reported as serving at this level in November 1968. The number of women members has shown fairly steady growth since 1941, when 144 were reported.<sup>1</sup> Some 299 Republican women, and an unspecified number of Democrats were candidates for state legislatures in the November elections.

There are no readily available figures for the number of American women who serve in elected office at the local municipal level.

The American system under which the President selects and appoints his Cabinet from outside the ranks of Congress might be expected to provide more latitude for the inclusion of outstanding women than does the Canadian cabinet system. In fact, however, only two women have ever been members of a President's cabinet.

Within the political parties American women appear to be extremely active. In both political parties women are represented on local, state, and national councils and the government information service tells us that they help to shape party policy, plan strategy and direct activity.<sup>2</sup> The so-called 50-50 plan is in effect in a number of states, whereby party offices at all levels are, either by law or by party regulation, required to be distributed equally between men and women. It seemed necessary, however, as

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<sup>1</sup> See Table XXI

<sup>2</sup> Frances Huggard, "Women in U.S. Elections". U.S. Information Service. U.S. Elections '68.





Table XXI

Women in the United States Congress

1931-32	--	8	
1941-42	--	10	
1951-52	--	11	
1961-62	--	19	
1963-64	--	13	(2 Senators, 11 Representatives)
1967-68	--	12	(1 Senator, 11 Representatives)
1969-70	--	11	(1 Senator, 10 Representatives)

(There are 100 Senators and 435 Representatives in Congress)

Women in State Legislatures

1931	--	154
1941	--	144
1946	--	234
1949	--	217
1951	--	239
1958	--	341
1968	--	350

(There are approximately 9400 seats in State Legislatures)



recently as 1963, for the Committee on Civil and Political Rights of the President's Commission on the Status of Women to recommend that the 50-50 plan be established or strengthened where political participation of women was lagging, and also to urge the parties to give women a voice in policy decisions commensurate with their skills, experience and efforts.<sup>1</sup>

There is no question that women in both political parties play a vital role in the detail work of organizing, campaigning, and voter education. The Republican Party operates through its National Federation of Republican Women; the Democratic Party women are organized in autonomous local groups. U.S. women also make a great contribution to voter education on a non-partisan basis through the League of Women Voters. Founded some 40 years ago, the League was the successor to the National American Woman Suffrage Association. Its purpose was and is to provide the information necessary for intelligent exercise of the franchise. Its 150,000 members do this by sponsoring public meetings at which candidates of different parties are available for questioning, and by distributing non-partisan information on candidates and issues. It explores, studies and reports on public affairs, especially at the local and state level. It acts as a watchdog between elections, the members covering endless council and committee meetings and reporting to its membership and the public in general. It is consistently non-partisan and, though it may take a stand on issues, it does not support or oppose candidates or parties.

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<sup>1</sup> Report of the Committee on Civil and Political Rights to the President's Commission on the Status of Women, October, 1963. (U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C.) p. 9.



Great Britain. In Great Britain women over thirty won the right to vote in 1918, and in 1928 the franchise was broadened to include all women over 21. Up to the general election of 1966 there had been 81 **women elected** to the United Kingdom Parliament. There are today 26 women in the House of Commons out of a total membership of 630. One is a Cabinet Minister, and 5 hold ministerial positions outside the Cabinet. British women MPs today account for approximately 4% of the membership in the House of Commons, and thus win out over U.S. and Canadian women, with only 2% and less than 1% respectively. Canadian women have never constituted more than 2.2% of the membership of the Canadian House of Commons.

In the United Kingdom the number of women reaching Cabinet and Ministerial rank is also considerably greater than in the U.S. and Canada. It appears, furthermore, that British women do possibly better than American and certainly better than Canadian women in the major political organizations. Since 1926, 11 women have been elected to the office of Chairman of the National Union of Conservative and Unionist Associations, a position which changes hands annually. One of the 2 vice-presidents of the Conservative Party Organization is normally a woman. The National Executive Committee of the Labour Party has 5 women members elected by the annual party conference, and since 1930, 29 women have been elected chairmen of the National Executive Committee.





Comparison with 1951. Compared with 1951, the percentages of women elected to the various parliaments of the Western world has generally increased, though not dramatically. In that year women made up about 17% of the Supreme Soviet as against 28% in 1966, but 5% was about the maximum percentage of women in other parliaments. The Norwegian Parliament had 4%, as compared with about 10% now. In 1951 women members were about 3% of the British House of Commons. Today they are up to 4%. Women membership in the U.S. Congress remains the same, at 2%. Women in the French National Assembly have decreased from 3% to about 2%.<sup>1</sup>

Australia. In Australia, where women have had the vote for more than 60 years, there had been, by 1960, only 30 elected members of the Commonwealth and State legislatures. In 1960 there were 12 women in these elected offices and about 100 in local councils.<sup>2</sup>

Other Commonwealth Countries. Some mention should be made of India and Ceylon, both countries where women have reached the rank of Prime Minister. In India the electoral system, I understand, has been designed to provide that a certain number of women are returned to Congress at each

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<sup>1</sup> Maurice Duverger, The Political Role of Women. UNESCO, 1955, p. 145.

<sup>2</sup> Norman MacKenzie, Women in Australia. F.W. Cheshire, 1962, p. 264.



election. In the Lower House 10 seats out of 500 are reserved for women deputies. On a rotation system at each election 10 constituencies are chosen in which political parties must nominate women candidates. There are 50 women deputies in Congress at the present time. The same system is in effect in almost all the provinces. Many women deputies, it is understood, become ministers almost automatically. It would be interesting to pursue this subject but, as the situation perhaps has only limited relevance to the Canadian scene, further study must be deferred.



## Chapter Four

### WOMEN AND PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY

#### Political Institutions other than Elected Bodies.

This study has not attempted a detailed examination of the participation of Canadian women in the Judiciary, senior civil service, and government appointed boards, councils and commissions, all of which are political in the broad sense. As for the Judiciary, no woman was ever appointed to a superior court in Canada until February 1969.<sup>1</sup> There have been at least two women county court judges, and a handful of magistrates, family and juvenile court and citizenship court judges.<sup>2</sup> It seems unlikely that there can be any considerable number of appointments of women to the Judiciary until the percentage of women in the legal profession increases significantly. Women in the civil service are, I understand, the subject of another study. There are very few high-ranking women civil servants, and it is of course at a very senior level that civil servants perform the political function of acting as advisors to their ministers.

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<sup>1</sup> Rejane Laberge-Colas has been appointed a puisne Judge of the Quebec Superior Court. The Globe and Mail, Feb., 22, 1969, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Judy LaMarsh, op cit., p. 294-295.



As to women on federal boards, commissions, councils and on boards of government corporations, a survey made in January 1968 shows that of 838 appointments to 93 such bodies only 57 or 6.8% were women.<sup>1</sup> Many briefs presented to the Royal Commission on the Status of Women have urged that the government appoint more women to these positions, and these recommendations presumably apply at all levels of government. If they are to be followed up effectively a good deal ought to be known about the machinery and methods used by governments in making selections and appointments. Judy LaMarsh's discussion of the subject of appointments at the federal level leaves an uneasy impression that the process is unsystematic and haphazard, certainly as it relates to women, but possibly also as it applies to men. Recalling her cabinet experience, she writes: "The matter of appointments was one that became increasingly frustrating. No matter how little a suffragette by temperament, circumstances gradually forced me into the role of acting as spokesman and watchdog for women. If there had been half a dozen women in the Cabinet, that wouldn't have been necessary, but I had to carry this dual, unasked for, entirely unofficial, and unpaid role." She goes on to

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<sup>1</sup> National Council of Women of Canada: Brief to the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada (No. 131), p. 3.





say that "For five years the necessity of constantly raising the question of women appointments made me feel like a veritable harpy about the subject. During one period I tried not to mention it, but appointments to a few boards came up, and not one woman was appointed throughout the period."

She assisted the Deputy Minister of Manpower in locating a woman appointee to the chairmanship of the new Immigration Appeal Board, but she goes on to say, "I could never find a woman with a sufficiently broad background in banking or economics or business to recommend to Walter Gordon while he was Minister of Finance for the Bank of Canada Board," and further, "I soon ran out of women of my own acquaintanceship who might be qualified to hold such responsible positions. I began to compile a black book, the names in it growing from lists sent to me by national women's organizations, from newspaper clippings, and from word-of-mouth recommendations. No one else in the whole of Government, to my knowledge, ever kept such a list, and it was often loaned to the Privy Council office, or one of my colleagues, who were searching for a likely appointee."

The point is raised not in criticism of Judy LaMarsh, who was prepared to attempt in whatever way she could, to



fill a gap in the system, but rather to point out that the usual methods, whatever they are, of finding people for these positions apparently fail to produce any women.

A study of women in appointed office at the provincial and municipal levels of government would be valuable.

Participatory Democracy and the Machinery of Involvement.

Outside of established political institutions it is normal for people to come together in groups around issues, in order to bring pressure to bear on governments and influence the process of political decision-making.

But in contemporary society this aspect of political activity has taken on a new dimension. Because of the complexities of modern government, because of the increasing dehumanization of computerized bureaucracy, there is widespread concern about the gap between government and governed, decision-makers and those who are affected by the decisions.

Both political leaders and the public are looking for machinery to bridge the gap. Other systems besides the purely political in our society are similarly faced with the problem of the conflict between bureaucratic organization and the individual's right to a voice in decisions which concern him. The educational system has student power. The social welfare system has client power. The political system has participatory democracy.



New Channels for Advice -- Advisory Councils and Boards

Governments, in setting up advisory boards and councils, such as the Economic Council, the Canadian Council on Rural Development, and the Canadian Consumer Council, are reflecting the view that parliamentary representation and the civil service bureaucracy are not alone adequate to fulfil the advisory role in government policy-making. As we have noted, women are not as yet an important part of the new advisory bodies even though in many cases there would seem to be justification for having women over-represented rather than under-represented here, to balance in part the situation of under-representation in elected bodies. What possible justification, for example, can there be for having anything short of a 50% representation of women on the new Canadian Consumer Council? Yet there are, in fact, 16 male members to 8 women.<sup>1</sup>

New Channels for Political Reaction: Area Desks

In theory it might be expected that community play-back and reaction to government policy could be counted on from Members of Parliament and from party organizations. The Opposition is the usual vehicle for political protest. Parliamentary committees ostensibly scrutinize government

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<sup>1</sup>

The Ottawa Journal, Nov. 9, 1968, p. 23.





policy on behalf of the electorate. Party organizations are presumed to feed criticism and comment from the grass-roots up to the party leaders. The political party, the Prime Minister is quoted as saying, is an arm of "communication, verification, participation".<sup>1</sup> But these conventional lines of communication are also apparently inadequate. We learn that a national network of contacts and regional desks has been organized as part of the Prime Minister's office "to keep the Prime Minister informed of changing conditions, the views of various people, the feed-back on the performance of the Government, and what the public wants from the Government". It is stated that the network is made up of businessmen, intellectuals, newspapermen and editors, professional people, union leaders -- not all of them Liberals.<sup>2</sup> One would be interested to know whether there are many women in this organization.

#### The Political Parties and Participation by Women.

Whether or not there are doubts in some quarters about the party organizations as effective channels for grass-roots influence on government policy, it seems fairly clear that parties are limited in their usefulness to women as a means of political participation. Judging by the small number of women in elected executive positions at the national level

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<sup>1</sup> The Ottawa Journal, Nov. 11, 1968, p. 19, quoting a speech to the Quebec Section of the Liberal Federation of Canada.

<sup>2</sup> The Globe and Mail, Nov. 4, 1968.



of the three major political parties, one must conclude that women do not exercise much direct influence on party policy.

It was presumably the intention when the separate women's associations of the two major parties were formed, now many years ago, that women would, through them, have a more effective voice in party matters. These women's groups have certainly been tremendously successful in affording an outlet for women in the organizational and what one might almost call the home-making aspects of the parties. They have also played a mildly educational role of the afternoon-meeting-with-speaker type, and have offered opportunities for shy women, inhibited in mixed groups, to take part in discussions and learn the basic rules of conducting meetings. Above all, the women's organizations have provided the working force to get candidates, mostly men, elected; the house-to-house canvassers, the coffee-party hostesses, the telephone committees, the poll workers, the drivers, the envelope-stuffers and the stamp-lickers. But it is open to question whether the women's groups have helped or hindered the participation of women at the policy-making level of the parties. As has been noted earlier, several of our women MPs and MPPs suggest that the women's groups divert into the mechanics of running the party,



energies which might better be applied to substantive matters of party policy.

If positions on the parties' national committees are filled by the appointees of the women's groups, the majority of whom are interested in mechanics rather than in policy, then there is less room at the top for women who are keen to rise in the party with a view to becoming candidates themselves. As the brief presented to the Commission by the Manitoba Volunteer Committee on the Status of Women indicates, some soul-searching is currently going on relating to the whole question of separate women's party organizations. It is worth noting that the same sort of problem is troubling the Young Liberal Federation as well.<sup>1</sup>

The NDP does not have a separate organization for women. There is, instead, a federal Women's Committee which corresponds roughly to a standing committee in the other parties. One of its main functions is educational. It organizes, for example, an annual Women's Holiday Workshop, which last year took the form of a 5-day summertime conference with child care laid on so that mothers could attend the sessions. Local women's committees act as auxiliaries at the constituency level in much the same way as the women's organizations of other parties, but they are made up of regular members of the party.

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<sup>1</sup>

The Toronto and District Young Liberal Association has moved to disband and reorganize as part of the senior Liberal Association. The Globe and Mail, Jan. 25, 1969.





The Liberal Leadership Convention, April 1968

What conclusions can be drawn from observing the 1968 Liberal leadership convention, that most party of all party occasions, as to the level of participation by women?

There can be no doubt about the women's interest. They were there in force and they were of all ages; -- the distinguished members of the Convention Organization Committee, the hostesses, the workers manning the stalls and information booths, the poster-waving, mini-skirted girls, the office staff and volunteers, and finally the delegates, the latter in a proportion of something like one woman to 4 or 5 men.

Visible on the platform from time to time was Pauline Jewett, as Vice-President of the Liberal Federation, who had the honour of introducing Mr. Pearson. She was also commendably visible to the television audience as a commentator throughout the convention. The President and the Past President of the Women's Liberal Federation had almost the first words from the platform but, as the loudspeaker system had not yet been adjusted, their prayers, if indeed they were prayers, went heavenward unnoticed by the audience. Also on the platform from time to time were Mrs. Pearson, and the wives and daughters of the leadership candidates.





During the afternoon in which the candidates conducted a marathon three-ring-circus series of half-hour policy workshops, I saw one woman chair a session most effectively. There was, however, never more than one question raised from the floor by a woman at any of the sessions I attended, except at Mr. MacEachen's. He insisted on hearing only from the women, and elicited good questions on medicare, rural education, immigration and communications.

Off campus, as it were, Mr. Trudeau and Mr. MacEachen scheduled special meetings with women delegates. Mr. Winters offered them breakfast with Mrs. Winters. The other candidates made no special bow to women delegates, and perhaps they were right.

The women entitled to be present as delegates were Liberal Senators and retired Senators, the 2 Liberal Members of the House of Commons, the 6 Liberal women candidates defeated in the 1965 election, and a few Liberal provincial Members and defeated candidates. Among the ex officio delegates were the 2 women Vice-Presidents of the National Liberal Federation, 7 women members of its standing committees, the executive officers of the Women's Liberal Federation, and the President and 2 officers of each of the 10 provincial Liberal women's associations. Of the 6 elected delegates from each of the 265 constituencies it is mandatory that one must be a woman and one a



Young Liberal. A quick survey of the delegate list showed that 55 constituency delegations included more than the one mandatory woman. Constituency practice varies as to what happens when a woman is elected in open competition with men as one of the first 4 delegates. Some, but not all, constituencies still reserve the fifth place for the "mandatory" woman. Finally, there were many women "alternate" delegates, who swelled the crowd, if not the vote.

The women delegates with whom I talked, and they were a completely random pick, were intelligent and interesting. For example, one had had a distinguished career in municipal politics and had come close to winning a seat in a provincial election. One had recently been defeated, but by only 11 votes, in a bid for the provincial nomination in her riding. Two were from the Northwest Territories, both teachers, one an Indian, one a United Church minister's wife, both articulate about their communities' needs.

So one is left with an impression of many interested, enthusiastic women providing perhaps a minimal amount of political leadership, but a great deal of skilled management, expert housekeeping, critical comment, voting support, energy and atmosphere. It was, in fact, a new kind of atmosphere for a Canadian political convention. The smoke-filled room and the serried ranks of dark business suits had given way to something which had gaiety and excitement. Ballyhoo and bands



aside, how are we to account for the gala performance quality of the convention? Was it the effect of so many young people, or particularly so many young women, or just women? The "It's Winters" -- "It's Spring" battle of the buttons was fun with a feminine touch.

Coming down to earth with a bump, one would have to say that the convention had no immediately encouraging impact on the fortunes of women in the Liberal Party. In the election which followed, only one Liberal woman was a candidate, and she was defeated. The acid test of women's acceptance as a person in any of the parties is whether she can win a nomination and whether she can get elected.

Women Candidates in the Three Major Political Parties.

If sheer numbers were the only criterion, it would be hard to escape the impression that women play a more significant role in the NDP than in the Liberal and Progressive Conservative parties. In the 1968 general election, 34 out of a total of 967 candidates were women. Of these 34, 21 were NDP, 5 were PC and one Independent PC, one was Liberal, and the remaining 6 were Social Credit, Ralliement Cr ditiste, Independent and Communist. If, however, we compare the number of each party's women candidates who ran in ridings where there was a likelihood of winning, the score as between the parties is evened out somewhat. An examination of the votes polled





makes it clear that not more than 2 of the 21 NDP women candidates had the slightest chance of winning, and Grace MacInnis did, in fact, win. Of the 5 official PC women candidates, only 2, Jean Wadds and Laura Sabia, were really in the running. The one Liberal woman candidate, Margaret Rideout, had been the incumbent member and had a good chance of winning again, but lost.

Going back to the 1965 general election, the NDP again fielded the most women candidates, with one elected and 15 defeated. Among the defeated, Martha Brewin polled nearly 21,000 votes against Robert Winters' 43,000 -- a notable performance, but hardly a threat. The Liberals ran 8 women and elected 2. But of their defeats, Pauline Jewett lost by only 500 votes, and Margaret Konantz, Dorothy Dearborn, and Isabel MacBeth all ran second and were relatively serious competition. Lenore Andrews, the sixth Liberal candidate, running against Mr. Diefenbaker in Prince Albert, perhaps hardly expected to win! For the Progressive Conservatives Jean Casselman Wadds was successful, but the remaining 5 candidates trailed the winners by a fairly wide margin.

In the field of provincial politics Ontario has had 104 women candidates during the 50 years women have had the right to hold elected office.<sup>1</sup> Of these,

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<sup>1</sup> Table VIII, p. 22.



50 have been CCF-NDP, 26 have been Liberal, 7 Progressive Conservative, and 21 minor parties or Independents.

Three CCF-NDP women have won a total of 4 elections, one Progressive Conservative has been elected twice, and no Liberal woman has ever been elected, though Jean Newman, in a by-election in Toronto-Eglinton in 1962, lost by only 38 votes.

To arrive at valid conclusions as to which of the parties is least discouraging to women candidates one would need further analysis of election results of defeated federal and provincial candidates, and of the history of the vote in the constituencies where they ran.

Party matters as they affect provincial and federal women elected Members are dealt with elsewhere in this study. The section on women in municipal politics contains references to the councillors' varying views on party politics.

It will be remembered that almost all MPs and MLAs under examination had been elected officers of their local or provincial party associations. (Many belonged to the women's organizations as well.) Municipal councillors who had run in provincial or federal elections had, as a rule, also held executive positions in the party organization.



The Uncommitted Woman Voter

Before leaving the subject of party involvement, some notice should be taken of the conscientiously non-partisan attitude of many Canadian women, the tendency to hang back from party affiliation. How widely this characteristic applies is difficult to gauge, but the question is obviously of great importance if long-standing, close association with one of the political parties at the constituency level is a vital prerequisite to getting the nomination.

A significant number of women municipal councillors replying to our questionnaire gave as a reason for not wishing to run in the provincial or federal field, their desire to retain their freedom to judge political issues for themselves, their reluctance to commit themselves in advance to a party line.

Maurice Duverger in The Political Role of Women discusses the proposition that there is a higher proportion of women's than men's votes in the uncommitted, "floating", or "fringe" vote. He suggests that in opinion polls before elections women are more ready than men to admit they have not made up their minds how they will vote. The women's vote, he concludes, is more independent than men's votes, "less rooted in party traditions and habits, less hidebound, more open-minded".<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Maurice Duverger, The Political Role of Women, (UNESCO, 1955), p. 143.



There is a tendency noted by Duverger to equate the politically uncommitted with the politically immature. At least one of our women parliamentarians holds this view, suggesting that interest in party is the same as interest in policy. But this conclusion might be disputed by many intellectuals. It is perhaps relevant to note that Canada's present Prime Minister is reported to have stated that he had never belonged to a political party until shortly before his election to Parliament in 1965. Prior to that, he said, he had spurned party affiliation in order to retain his "intellectual and personal freedom".<sup>1</sup>

In any event, if many intelligent women are in fact politically uncommitted, political parties would do well to take note. The major political parties are currently considering introducing, or have already introduced, party politics at the municipal level. This may well make it considerably more difficult for women to run or to be elected. One seasoned politician, who had been highly successful in the municipal field over a period of years, reported that she would never have been elected if party politics had been involved. Her campaign organization and her support was altogether multi-party in character.

One further implication is important to the parties. If non-partisanship is widespread, then the effectiveness of party-based political education programs is correspondingly limited.

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<sup>1</sup> Ottawa Journal, November 9, 1968, reporting Mr. Trudeau in an open discussion with students at Queens University.





### Women in Pressure Groups

Canadian women have so far made their most considerable political contribution from outside the established political institutions and parties. Countless women have felt no hesitation in participating in the groups which form and reform around public issues in order to bring pressure on governments to act in a certain way.

The data gathered from women in political office about their network of connections with all manner of voluntary and professional associations prior to election demonstrates clearly this line of communication between the community and the politician. The elected women have stepped over into the field of direct political action, but thousands of their former associates continue to work for political goals from the sidelines.

The organizational bases from which women exercise this political function seem to me to fall into four main categories -- first, the subject-oriented, voluntary associations; second, the ad hoc groups formed for action on particular issues; third, the women's organizations; and fourth, the professional, business, and labour organizations.

To dispose of the last of these categories first, it seems doubtful that professional and labour associations and organizations at present provide any channel for women's political influence. The hearings of this Commission have indicated a sometimes surprising lack of women in executive positions in these bodies. Women are, for obvious reasons, in controlling positions



in such bodies as the Canadian Nurses' Association. They also have a strong voice in the associations of those professions in which men and women are virtually interchangeable. I think, for example, of the Canadian Association of Social Workers. But even in the Canadian Teachers' Federation, where women, one might have expected, would have at least an equal voice with men, their participation at the policy level is disappointing.

The organizations in the first category, the subject-oriented voluntary associations, are as wide in interest range as is Canadian society; the Social Planning Councils, the Community Planning Associations, the Home and School Associations, the Consumers Association, the social and welfare agencies, the cultural agencies, the United Nations Associations, the overseas relief agencies, and so on, ad infinitum. Through these organizations men and women are involved in developing public understanding of their subject of concern, discussing, studying, formulating policies, spotting emerging issues, urging courses of action on all levels of government, through the process of sending delegations and presenting briefs, and writing letters to key political authorities.

The second category, the ad hoc groups formed for action on particular issues, include the seminar or conference approach to policy-making. This process typically pulls together a cross-section of government and non-government experts, elected representatives, and the public, to discuss and recommend policy. The scale may be anything from the neighbourhood to the nation. The conference technique is one which has grown in significance both



in the U.S.A. and Canada in the last decade. We have seen, for example, the Canadian Conference on Children, the Canadian Conference on Aging, the Vanier Conference on the Family, all within the last few years. In all these, women participated fully in organization, leadership, and attendance.

It is interesting to look at a recent example of this process, the Canadian ~~Housing~~ <sup>on Housing</sup> Conference, of October, 1968, with special attention to the part played by women. The conference was planned and organized through a central executive committee and supported by provincial committees. One of the 13 members of the executive committee was a woman, a member of the Board of the Ontario Housing Corporation. There were many active women members of the provincial committees. One of the provincial committee chairmen was a woman, an alderman of the City of Regina, longtime housing policy expert, and member of the Canadian Housing Design Council. Five out of 10 provincial committee secretaries were women -- all but one of these were associated with provincial or metropolitan welfare councils and one was a member of the Quebec Housing Commission. The Manitoba Secretary was also the Housing Chairman of the National Council of Women. Working with the British Columbia committee, was the Point Grey Study Group, a sort of voluntary task force, composed largely of women, which takes on community causes on an ad hoc basis as the need arises.

All conference delegates, men and women, were selected by the provincial committees on the basis of their special qualifications to contribute to the discussions. There were 555 delegates at the conference, of which 80 were women, approximately 14%. Eight of





the women delegates were elected representatives serving at one of the three levels of government: Mrs. Grace MacInnis, M.P., Mrs. Grace McCarthy, Minister without Portfolio in the British Columbia Legislature, Mrs. Margaret Renwick, MPP, Ontario, Mrs. Margaret Campbell, City of Toronto Controller, and 4 municipal councillors, from Regina, Red Deer, West Vancouver, and Victoria. The women delegates were connected either in a professional or board-member relationship with the federal and provincial housing corporations, city housing commissions and planning boards; with tenants' associations, citizens' committees, and the Consumers Association of Canada; with business, with the churches, with the universities; with federal government departments; with social planning and community welfare councils, and with social agencies; with women's organizations, including Local and National Councils of Women, Canadian Federation of University Women, Women's Institutes, and the Association of Women's Electors.

There was clearly no scarcity of qualified women delegates, and they were involved, visible, and vocal in every phase of the conference -- on platforms, at head tables, on panels, as discussion group chairmen, discussants and rapporteurs, and on conference committees.

This particular conference has been dealt with in detail simply because it presents a concrete and recent example of reasonable participation by women in a political milieu. The subject matter of the conference was highly political, resulting in reports and recommendations to all levels of government across



Canada. The conference included no "token" representation of women as such. Women delegates were there on the basis of personal qualifications, and the analysis of their connections indicates that their composite backgrounds touched on almost every aspect of the subject under discussion. On this basis of qualification, the proportion of women delegates turned out to be almost 15%. It appears that 15% of a conference of this size provides a sufficient number of women to permit them to operate, not as oddities, but simply as delegates, without provoking any special reaction or comment because of their sex.

The history of the women's organizations as channels of political influence is one which deserves more attention than has been possible in this study. As has been pointed out, organizations such as the National and Local Councils of Women, the Women's Institutes, the University Women's Clubs, and the Canadian Federation of University Women played a vital part in the struggle for equal political rights. They continue to perform a watchdog function as to the overall situation of women in Canada, and this Royal Commission is an example of a political happening which was in large part a result of their concern. Their network of communications is a valuable one, and the filtering upwards of resolutions from the local to the national level, for examination and referral to the appropriate political body, is a useful, if somewhat cumbersome, process.

The women's organizations also provide a political service in keeping in the public eye women actively engaged in public affairs. The Federation of Business and Professional Women's



Clubs is, as far as I know, the only body, public or private, which makes any effort to produce an annual listing of all women in public office. The women's organizations have also felt they have some responsibility for bringing names of suitable women for appointment to government positions to the attention of the authorities. The need to systematize this sort of participation is reflected both in their briefs to the Commission and in Judy LaMarsh's discussion of appointments to government boards and councils referred to earlier in this study.

These two areas of concern, which might be called status and visibility, are related to the goal of bringing social attitudes and practice into line with the already established principle of equal political rights. The attitude is a defensive one, and assumes that women are still subject to discrimination. Presumably as discrimination disappears, so will the need for women to organize for these purposes.

There are, however, several other important areas of political activity in which the women's organizations are from time to time involved which are not specifically feminist and could as well be carried on by mixed citizens' associations as by women's groups. These are the types of activity undertaken by the League of Women Voters in the United States, an organization which has no counterpart on a national scale in Canada, despite considerable efforts in the past to create one.

A very impressive group operating in this field at the local level is the Association of Women Electors of Metropolitan Toronto.





Since it was initiated in 1937 it has piled up a remarkable record of achievement and an enviable reputation for informed and penetrating comment on municipal affairs. Its avowed purposes are to arouse among women an active interest in municipal government; to encourage all citizens to realize their responsibilities as voters; to educate and inform citizens concerning civic affairs; and to be strictly non-partisan, non-sectarian, and non-profit-making.

Its members observe and report on every meeting of the City of Toronto Council, Metropolitan Toronto Council, Toronto Board of Education, and the Metropolitan Toronto School Board and committees and boards of these authorities. These reports are made public and are noted for their objectivity, accuracy, and regularity. The Association holds candidates' meetings throughout the city at the time of civic elections. An important part of its work is the preparation of studies and briefs, sometimes, indeed, at the request of the city, on civic problems which warrant investigation, and the martialling of public support behind principles and programs which it believes are in the best interests of the city. It works closely with many organizations interested in civic improvement and social progress, such as the Social Planning Council, Bureau of Municipal Research, Board of Trade, Local Council of Women, and Home and School Association.

I found this group to be of formidable intelligence, industry, and wit. While those I talked to were very aware of the need for a greater supply of able and qualified candidates for municipal office, they were not particularly interested in whether they were men or





women. None of those questioned would consider running for office themselves, on the grounds that the demands on their time would be too great, and their influence on government possibly less. This is in contrast to the Association of Women Electors in Victoria, where two former members are now in elected municipal office. There is also an Association of Women Electors in Kingston, and in North Vancouver.

At the national level the women's organizations maintain a non-partisan attitude since their membership includes organizations and individuals of all parties. While there is, I understand, nothing in the constitution of the National Council of Women which precludes involvement in politics, it has, over the years, become practical policy to refrain from supporting a particular candidate or a particular party. At the local level the situation is somewhat different. The national body, in terms of reference provided to chairmen of committees dealing with citizenship, in fact urges involvement in the local political scene. Practice varies across the country, but in several communities the Local Council of Women has officially sponsored and supported women candidates in their initial bid for municipal election. This is clearly only possible where municipal elections are non-partisan, since membership of a particular Local Council of Women may well include the local women's groups of more than one of the political parties.

The women's organizations have been an important force in educating their own members on the responsibilities of citizenship, and this process continues. A recent example is a pilot project launched by the National Council of Jewish Women. They are developing "Schools for Citizen Participation" in several Canadian communities,



offering their members a 10-session seminar course, covering such subjects as human and civil rights, structure of governments and social institutions, and some examination of national and local social issues. The courses are given by qualified lecturers, and are conducted with the cooperation of university extension departments, and various local agencies.

The foregoing review of women's participation in pressure groups outside the arena of elected office leads to the conclusion that Canadian women are very ready to commit themselves as individuals to particular causes. They support them with energy and effectiveness. In general they appear to feel easier in this para-political involvement than in political commitments in the party sense. This attitude has perhaps been fostered by the women's organizations which are non-partisan for practical reasons, but sometimes seem almost to imply that neutrality is a positive goal.

The para-political involvement of women has a special significance when looked at in the context of our changing contemporary society and the changing subject matter of political decision making. Whereas the central stuff of politics has been, in the past, the expanding economy, increasing production, and national wealth, the situation is now changing. Political concerns are more and more questions of distribution, of moderating and compensating for disparities, of closing gaps between rich and poor, advantaged and disadvantaged, of medicare, pension plans, and guaranteed annual income. What was relatively peripheral is moving towards the centre, and it is in these subjects that women have developed



significant expertise. It seems important that these currents of change should carry women into a more direct involvement in politics. The arguments for removing any obstacles blocking the way gain weight.





## Chapter Five

### CONCLUSIONS AND GOALS

The information which has been gathered is, to say the least, hardly conducive to optimism. It confirms that women are, and have been, only just visible at the federal level of politics and only slightly more so at the provincial level. Only 2 women have ever ranked as belonging briefly to the political elite or top decision-making group within the political system. Only 2 have held ministerial portfolios provincially. Only a handful of women have had any importance at the policy-making level of the parties. No parties appear to have shown special interest in seeking women candidates, and none have followed a policy of identifying and grooming potential women candidates.

The women's organizations in the two major political parties are outside the mainstream of party business, and constitute basically an efficient and devoted group of volunteers dedicated to getting the party's candidates elected. The women's organizations have not accepted as part of their function the task of developing and supporting women candidates or women contestants for election to the top policy-making positions within the party. There is a clearly discernible conviction in some quarters that the women's organizations drain off some of the strength which would be valuable in the counsels of the party proper, and there is some movement towards reorganization which, from the constituency level up, would bring women into the arena where they would hear policies discussed and be in a position to take part in decisions.



The participation of women in politics at the municipal level is far more encouraging. Women are clearly visible here, and becoming steadily more so. But those who are interested in moving on to provincial and federal politics report their discouragement. Most of them point to the near impossibility of winning the nomination. Furthermore, some of those who have held rewarding executive positions at the municipal level are not disposed to become backbenchers at a higher level of government, believing as they do that there is virtually no hope of women rising to Cabinet positions.

Though it would be encouraging if governments, as well as national and provincial party organizations, were enthusiastic in supporting the goal of more women in Parliament and the legislatures, this alone would not be enough. The crucial hurdle for women is at the point of nomination, and the method of candidate selection in Canada places the effective voice here directly with the constituency organization. There is a slight distinction to be made in this connection between the two main types of candidates. The first is the straight constituency representative and the second is the potential minister. Except in the case of established party leaders, prospective cabinet ministers and, very occasionally, bright young hopefuls being wooed by the party, national party top brass in Canada does not, and for the most part, cannot "place" nominees in constituencies.<sup>1</sup> "Parachuting" is not<sup>2</sup> popular, as experience in the last general election showed. Even

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See Martin Sullivan, Mandate '68, (New York: Doubleday, 1968), p. 116, on the question of finding a constituency for Pierre-Elliott Trudeau. Also Judy LaMarsh, op. cit. p. 285.

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Judy LaMarsh, op. cit. 286.



Mitchell Sharp, sought in 1962 by a former president of the Eglinton Liberal Association, and offered to the constituency by the National Liberal Federation, still had to put up a serious fight to secure the<sup>1</sup> Liberal nomination in Eglinton.

The woman candidate must win her battle at the constituency level. If there is prejudice, it is likely to show up here, and this is where it counts against her. The national party organizers, be they ever so equality-minded, can give her only limited help.

Even in the United Kingdom, where women have played a significantly more important role in politics than they have in Canada, Conservative, Labour and Liberal Party national organizations have all urged in vain that constituency selection committees nominate more women candidates.<sup>2</sup> Though its fallacy has been demonstrated the belief apparently still holds that women don't make good candidates, make weak association leaders, are unacceptable to many voters who think women should be at home, and who ask the married women why she is neglecting her husband and family, and the single women why she is not married.

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<sup>1</sup> Brian Land, Eglinton, (Toronto: Peter Martin Associates, 1965), p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> In Britain between 1951 and 1964 only 5% of the Conservative candidatures by non-incumbents went to women. Yet a study of the 1955 and 1959 general elections showed that where a woman candidate replaced a man, or vice versa, there appeared to be no sex-related differences in the vote among Labour and Liberal candidates, while a Conservative woman candidate might expect to get possibly 300 votes less than a man.

Austin Ranney, Pathways to Parliament. (Madison and Milwaukee: University of Wisconsin Press, 1965), pp. 96-97.





A thorough study of candidate selection in Canada and its provinces seems to me to be badly needed. Possibly I am ignorant here and work has been done, of which I am unaware. But if more women are to be urged to run as candidates in Canadian elections, it would be helpful to know more about the basic process of selection. The questions asked by Austin Ranney in his study of candidate selection in Britain need to be applied to the Canadian scene. What are the political, social and psychological forces which bear on candidate selection? Who are the persons in the local party associations who influence the selection, and what sort of people are they? What are the criteria they apply in making their choices? What are the variations from party to party and, within a party, from constituency to constituency, in the ground rules relating to voting at a constituency nomination meeting? The national party headquarters lack information on people who sought but did not win nomination in past elections. In June 1968 there were 967 candidates seeking election, of whom 34, or 3.5%, were women. One would like to know how many more competed for each of the candidacies, and how many of them were women.

All this is simply a marking of the spot at which the main battle is joined, and a plea that further research be done. Meanwhile, to increase the number of women in elected office there are two main methods of approach. One is to whittle down, lower, demolish the barriers. The other is to enlarge the supply of available women. How large, in fact, are the womanpower resources from which we can draw?

Consider first the Canadian House of Commons. Most members enter it for the first time when they are between the ages of 35 and 50.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Norman Ward: The Canadian House of Commons: Representation. (University of Toronto Press, 1950), p. 118.

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Of Canada's 10,000,000 women, rather more than 2.3 million are between the ages of 35 and 55. Of this age group very close to 2,000,000 are married, roughly 200,000 are single, and 100,000 are widowed or divorced.<sup>1</sup> To seek election a woman must clearly be interested, able, and mobile. How many are?

The first screening process would eliminate married women with young children. One of the few general principles to which almost all Canadians subscribe is the proposition that the family unit is important and ought to be preserved and strengthened. Short of some drastic changes in values, and short of fundamental modifications in the distribution of child-rearing and household tasks as between husband and wife, married women with young children will remain relatively immobile. No amount of day care services and homemaker help can make it possible for more than an occasional maverick among them to be away in Ottawa at least five days a week through the long months when the House is in session.

Quite apart from whether there are young children in the family, the majority of husband and wife teams are not so organized as to allow the wife to be away from home for long periods of time. Nor is it often possible for her career to determine where she and her husband will live. Of our 2,000,000 married women, could we really consider more than 500,000 as mobile?

What of the 300,000 single, widowed, and divorced women? They are relatively free from family ties. Widows and divorcees, even if they have young children, can decide where they will live without having to consider a husband's career. But women whose means of livelihood cannot

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<sup>1</sup> Canada Year Book, 1968, p. 207.



readily be put in cold storage and taken out again after an indeterminate number of years, are ruled out of the running. Remaining are women with private means; women with portable careers (Miss Margaret Aitken, for example, wrote her newspaper column from Ottawa while she was a Member of Parliament); women who have reached sufficient eminence in their careers to be in demand at the point of defeat or retirement in spite of their years in Parliament (Dr. Pauline Jewett undoubtedly added to her academic acceptability by her service in Parliament), or women who are likely to rise to the top in Parliament and so be in demand because of their experience there. Surely not more than half, at the very most, of the 300,000 single, widowed, and divorced women could qualify as sufficiently mobile.

So, in the test of mobility, our 2.3 million total is reduced to 650,000. But to seek election a woman must be both keenly interested in politics and have the ability to represent a constituency effectively. This final screening is the most stringent of all. Would this eliminate 99 out of every 100 women? If so, we have reduced the total womanpower resources for the Canadian House of Commons to 6,500.

Obviously this sort of calculation is entirely conjectural. But perhaps the exercise brings a glimmer of reality to a discussion which is often lacking in substance.

We do well to remember here that while there are approximately the same number of women as men in the 35 to 55 year old age group in Canada, a very much larger number of men would be available for service in Parliament. Right at the outset, the total of 2.3 million men would not have to be reduced by 1.5 million because of marriage. One would also assume that as of now more men than women would be interested in politics and qualified to run.



Available womanpower resources obviously expand at the provincial level. Provincial capitals are within reach of more women. A significant number of women municipal councillors replying to our questionnaire said they would be extremely interested in running for election to the provincial legislature if they lived in or near the provincial capital. Sessions in provincial legislatures are shorter than in the federal Parliament, and the strain on home life and profession is correspondingly less.

At the municipal level of politics mobility beyond the local area is not required. With determination, the problems arising from family responsibilities can be met, as the returns to our questionnaire prove. Professional commitments are at least no more, and possibly less hampering for women than for men. The evidence seems to indicate that if a woman is sufficiently interested, has the ability, and a co-operative family, she can find a way to run for election.

How does this assessment of womanpower resources affect the goals to be set? With an all-out blitz effort, how many women do we hope could be elected to federal and provincial parliaments and to municipal councils within the next few years?

Consider first the federal level. It is obviously nonsense to talk about a Canadian Parliament 50% composed of women. Even in the U.S.S.R., with very different ideas about the social role of women and of the importance of the family unit, women make up only 28% of the membership of the Supreme Soviet. It is more relevant to Canada that Sweden, compact, homogeneous, well-educated, well-to-do, and democratic, has achieved a proportion of over 20% women in the legislature. By comparison, Canada's population is geographically straggling, lacks homogeneity, exhibits greater disparities in education and standard of living than Sweden's.







Let us therefore set a hypothetical goal for women members of the Canadian House of Commons at a somewhat lower level, say 15% of the total membership, and let us assume that this goal can be reached by stages over the period of the next three general elections. This would mean that we would have 39 women among the 264 members of Parliament by 1983 at the latest. At each general election the number of new Members entering the House of Commons rarely falls below 40% of the total membership.<sup>1</sup> With this turnover there would be 105 new Members at each election. In order to reach the goal by the target date proposed at least 13 of the new Members would have to be women, and more, if any of those previously elected had been defeated or retired.

At the provincial level there are arguments for setting the goal for women Members of the legislature at a slightly higher percentage, possibly 20% of the total membership of each legislature. Table XXII shows how many women this would involve.

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<sup>1</sup> Norman Ward, *op. cit.*, p. 115



Table XXII

<u>Province</u>	<u>Number of members in the legislature</u>			<u>Actual number of women members</u>
	<u>100%</u>	<u>20%</u>	<u>15%</u>	<u>Jan. 1, 1969</u>
Newfoundland	42	8	6	None
Prince Edward Island	32	6	4	None
Nova Scotia	46	9	6	None
New Brunswick	58	11	8	1
Quebec				
Legislative Council <i>✓</i>	24	4	3	None
Legislative Assembly	108	21	16	1
Ontario	117	23	17	2
Manitoba	57	11	8	2
Saskatchewan	59	11	8	<i>2 None</i>
Alberta	65	13	9	1
British Columbia	55	11	8	4
Yukon Territory	7	1	1	1
Northwest Territories	7	1	1	None
	<u>677</u>	<u>130</u>	<u>95</u>	<u>14 12</u>

*✓ Abolished effective December 31, 1960*

There seems to be little reason why there should not be as many women as men in municipal politics. The village of Tweed, Ontario, broke through not so long ago with an all-woman council, and life went on. The goal might simply be to urge women to run for all local offices with the hope of reaching 50% in fifteen years. Municipal council work, as returns to questionnaires, and parliamentarians' answers to letters have shown, is one of the most important training grounds available to women who are interested in political leadership. If the goals set for participation at provincial and and federal levels are ever to be met, then a tremendous all-out effort at the municipal level is a prerequisite.



It would be interesting to know whether a majority of Canadian men and women could regard these goals as either desirable or reasonable. Can governments, national and provincial party organizations, and constituency associations be asked to outline their views on women in politics? Can they be asked to state specifically their goals? If these, or indeed any goals of this sort are acceptable, then there are certain steps which governments and parties could take to further them.

First, the federal government could increase the visibility of women in politics by appointing qualified women to government boards, councils, and commissions, the Bench, the deputy minister level of the civil service, and to the Senate. Seeing women in positions of authority widens the horizons of the general public, and gives encouragement to younger women. Many briefs to this Royal Commission have made this point.<sup>1</sup> We would like to see the appropriate government department make a searching review of appointment procedures relating to both men and women, and work out systematic machinery for obtaining suitable suggestions for appointments. Information as to qualified women should be sought, not only from the women's organizations, but from the professional associations, the universities, the voluntary advisory and research bodies, and so on. There are

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<sup>1</sup> Brief No. 321, by Elisabeth Dohan, Jean L'Espérance, and Nancy Phillips, p. 27, covers this recommendation well.



many active and qualified women who may not be known to the women's organizations. We would like to see at least 2 qualified women on every government board. Rather than wait for over-all Senate reform, 15 more women might be appointed to this body, as suitable vacancies occur, with the object of raising the proportion of women members to 20%.

Second, the federal Cabinet and the Liberal party organization could seek out 2 absolutely top-flight women now, groom them for cabinet positions, and support in every way their candidacy for election at the earliest opportunity. Opposition parties should prepare similar plans.

Third, the federal government could take another hard look at parliamentary reforms which would make it easier for both women and men to run for office: — really adequate pensions for defeated Members of long standing; legislation to limit campaign expenses; adequate research staff for Opposition Members and government backbenchers; continuing reform of committee procedures to give a more effective role to Opposition Members and backbenchers.

Fourth, the federal government, working with other levels of government, should take all possible steps to facilitate across Canada the establishment of adequate supporting services for women pursuing careers, including parliamentary careers. This means day care, homemaker services, training courses for child care workers and homemakers. Changes in





income tax regulations are needed to allow the cost of such services as deductible expenses.

Provincial governments could follow the same policy; appoint women to government boards; review and report on machinery of appointment; drop the custom of appointing women ministers without portfolio, and aim at at least 2 women ministers with portfolio in each provincial cabinet; consider parliamentary reforms; make use of the Canada Assistance Act and other relevant legislation to implement supporting services.

Municipal governments too could do more to support women seeking election by including equal numbers of able men and women on municipal boards. It is also up to them to take the initiative in moving forward to supply supporting services.

To reach the 15% goal for women in the House of Commons and the 20% for women in provincial legislatures, the men and women of all parties have a tremendous job to do. As a basis for action, they need to study the actual election experience of women candidates, at least over the last 20 years, in both federal and provincial politics; facts and figures to show whether women candidates have actually been adopted in constituencies where they have a chance of winning, or not; facts and figures to show whether women candidates improved or worsened the party's standing in the riding where they ran.



The parties need, at both levels of government, to start looking now for women able to run and win in the next election. All must be women well-qualified to represent their constituents, and some must be women capable of handling ministerial roles. The parties need to start now to persuade 15 or 20% of their constituency associations to adopt women candidates.

If parties are seriously interested in developing a source of well-qualified women candidates, then, as we have noted earlier, they should move warily on any proposals to introduce party politics at the municipal level. There are two characteristics which make this field accessible and interesting to many non-partisan women, namely, the absence of party commitment, and the absence of a nomination battle. To obviate these characteristics would discourage many women from running, and thereby block perhaps the most strategic pipeline for supplying potential women candidates for higher levels of politics. Women with the experience and "visibility" which participation in municipal office provides may well be interested in dropping their non-partisan attitude and move on into provincial or federal politics.



Parties have a major part to play both in breaking down the attitudes hindering full participation of women in politics, and in increasing, through education, the supply of women who are politically informed and prepared to participate. In the area of political education, the non-partisan tendency of Canadian women presents a problem. Women who do not belong to a party do not hear what the party is saying. But this gap between the parties and the politically unaligned is a problem relating not only to women, but to men and young people as well. For large sections of the population, party-based efforts at political education are simply exhibitions of groups of people talking to themselves. Is it naive to suggest that the parties might consider seriously a multi-party approach, at least in some areas of political education? We understand that an experiment is proceeding along these lines in Charlottetown high schools, with the blessing of the Prince Edward Island Minister of Education. It is significant that this need was appreciated by the young people's associations within the three major political parties, who set about to meet it. Another small-scale experiment was seen when the Ottawa YM-YWCA and the Adult Education Division of the Collegiate Institute Board held a Guidance Day last September for Ottawa women, at which a booth dealing with women in politics was operated jointly by the three major political parties.

As provinces move to lower the voting age, the problem of political education becomes increasingly acute. The new voters are still in school, and the education must reach them there. It is difficult to see how it can prove other than one-sided and divisive unless the parties act together. It is indeed hard to see how education authorities can be persuaded to accept politics in the schools on any other basis.





How can the women outside the political field, the women in pressure groups and women's organizations, further the cause of raising the number of qualified women in politics? They are in a strong position to seek election themselves, and to encourage other women to do so. Perhaps every woman seeking political objectives might well ask herself whether she could accomplish more in elected office. The entry of more women into municipal politics is very much in the hands of these groups.

Having suggested that the parties, in some respects, be less partisan in order to draw women into accepting political responsibility, we might wish that women in pressure groups and in women's organizations would become more partisan. The women's organizations were well adapted to fighting for the vote. They lack machinery, however, for focussing on the next step, which is the election of qualified women to Parliament. While they can do much with programs aimed at awakening the social and political conscience of their members and the public, it will be a long, long time before citizenship education results in more women in the House of Commons. More specific tools are needed.

For a practical rather than a theoretical education in politics, women's organizations might do well to consider adopting the approach of the Association of Women Electors. Its total identification with the week to week business of municipal government leads to the spotting of issues which call for organized community action, and to the pursuit of such action.

At the provincial and federal levels of politics the women's organizations are hamstrung by non-partisanship. But if their members, regardless of party, are concerned about the need for more women in



politics, local groups could usefully aim educational projects at all the constituency organizations urging every party at the local level to consider running women candidates.

Women's organizations need to decide whether they are most effective politically when working as women en bloc (which in its most extreme form becomes the process of confrontation and negotiation), or whether they should adopt a policy of integration, operating through committees of both men and women, on projects and issues as they arise, using their organizational base mainly to initiate and facilitate action.

I admit to considerable doubt as to whether governments, parties, and the public will, when challenged, be ready to subscribe even to the rather modest goals which have been outlined. Attitudes to women's political role are widely divergent, and I sense no great preponderance of support for greater involvement. For example, while one politician believes that women have a special gift for politics because of their understanding of the concept of consensus, across the House another Member thinks, quite simply, that women in politics are a disaster. Judy LaMarsh points out that most male politicians do not think of women in politics at all. Outside the legislatures, men without a grain of prejudice in their professional settings, working in fields where men and women are virtually interchangeable, may tell you that a political career makes a woman hard, brassy, and strident. Many highly intelligent people, both men and women, tend to favour a supportive, slightly behind-the-scenes, role in politics for women. One of Canada's most distinguished journalists once said that the overwhelming demands of political life are almost impossible for a man with a family to meet, and quite impossible for a woman.



In any event, many of the measures discussed are in the nature of pump-priming. If there are to be more women in politics there is, in the long run, really no alternative to the fundamental task of changing attitudes, expectations, and habits of thought of men and women, boys and girls, and even pre-school children about the role of women in society, about the division of work between men and women.

Diversification of women's skills and occupations, greater numbers of women in the professions, active involvement of women throughout the length and breadth of the economy and society, women moving up into executive and managerial positions: - - developments such as these will provide the only solid basis for greater political involvement. On this, let Judge Helen MacGill have the last word. When asked, in 1941, why, after so many years of equal rights, none of our national figures were women, why there were no "king-sized women", she replied, "because no women are in the 'king-size' jobs yet. It is the job that gives a man a chance to furnish public proof of his ability, raises him to national stature and makes him 'king size' in the public eye. No one can be 'king size' in a little job." <sup>1</sup>

The changes of attitudes, expectations and habits of thought, which are the key to the diversification of women's occupations and to greater involvement in politics, will have to be brought about in the home and the school. Something must happen to shift the habits of thought which make parents and guidance counsellors direct girls towards a limited group of occupations only. In the political field both home and school should, of course, introduce young people to the

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<sup>1</sup> Elsie Gregory MacGill, op. cit., p. 232.





subject matter of politics and government, the techniques of self-expression, and the political issues of the day. But to be political is to be prepared to make decisions about the organization and direction of society. Somewhere along the line it becomes necessary to upset the set of expectations which suggest that girls will not be called upon to make decisions of this sort, that women can escape this responsibility.

As a closing digression, I may say that I have searched diligently for women in the leadership of the student activists whose thrust to have a voice in decisions which affect their lives so occupies the press today. We may deplore their methods and seethe with frustration at their lack of communication as to positive policy, but we would surely have to agree that their concern is highly political, and enormously hopeful for the future of participatory democracy in Canada. It is significant, and a little disheartening, that there are so few women to be found among the leaders.

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In the foregoing I have made no attempt to argue the value of having more women involved in the political processes in this country. I have proceeded from the assumption that groups applying themselves intelligently to the business of making decisions about policies which affect us all will be better balanced, and therefore make better decisions, if they contain both qualified men and qualified women, and not all men or all women. A mature community can surely do no other than develop its full human potential regardless of sex, and having done so, make the best possible use of it.





## Notes on Sources of Information

The primary source material for this study has been correspondence and interviews with women (and a smaller number of men) who are or have been elected representatives at the federal, provincial or municipal levels of government; Senators; wives of Members of Parliament and of members of provincial legislatures; members of executive and staff of national party organizations and of the women's party associations; and a variety of interested people including officers of national and local women's organizations. As much of the material was given in confidence, I have tried to present it in such a way as to avoid using names except where the information or point of view has been expressed publicly.

The following have been useful:

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### Newspapers and Periodicals

The Ottawa Citizen, The Montreal Star, and The  
Ottawa Journal were examined in a routine  
12 months for references to women in politics.  
Maclean's and Chatelaine. Other newspapers  
consulted but less systematically.





Briefs to the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada

Many briefs referred to women in public life, but briefs from the following bodies were of particular interest:

The Canadian Federation of University Women

The Manitoba Volunteer Committee on the Status of Women

The National Council of Women of Canada

The New Democratic Party











